Men-at-Arms

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Armies of the Medieval Italian Wars 1125–1325

Gabriele Esposito • Illustrated by Giuseppe Rava

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Series editor Martin Windrow

ARMIES OF THE MEDIEVAL ITALIAN WARS 1125-1325

Frederick Barbarossa's son, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI (1165-97), in a miniature from the early 14th-century *Codex Manesse* now held in Heidelberg University Library. After 1075, all Emperors inherited deeply rooted rivalries with the popes of their day; the consequent wars were fought in Italy, in parallel with imperial efforts to curtail the independent ambitions of the rich northern cities. Wearing a purple mantle over a dark blue tunic richly bordered with gold, Henry is shown with the imperial arms of a black eagle on gold, and the sceptre and sword symbolizing his political and military powers. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek; see 'Acknowledgements' for full reference)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

European rivalries

In the period before the emergence of European 'nation states' – distinct countries under effective central governments, with more or less securely defined borders – Italy, France, Germany and Spain/Portugal were simply geographical expressions. Each of them was divided into numbers of relatively large or small kingdoms or duchies ruled by competing aristocratic families. Dynastic marriage and inheritance shaped various alliances between them, of varying endurance, and stability was often further disturbed by enmities within ruling families.

During much of the period covered in this book, one major pattern of rivalry was identifiable between the rulers of the sprawling so-called 'Roman Empire' ('Holy' being added to the title only from about 1157) – whose heartland was, roughly, today's Germany – and the Papacy, and the main arena for their struggles was Italy.[1] Eventually the two main Italian factions, embracing coalitions of rulers and city-states, would become known by terms corrupted from originally German family names: the Guelphs on the side of the Papacy, and the Ghibellines supporting the Empire. From 1266 and 1282 respectively, two other external powers also intervened in southern Italian affairs: the Angevin dynasty led by Charles of Anjou, younger brother of the French King Louis IX; and the Kingdom of Aragon in eastern Spain.

The Emperors (or 'Kings of the Romans') were drawn from German rulers usually already titled 'Kings of the Germans', and were elected to the imperial throne by the most powerful regional magnates. After the 12th century these imperial 'electors' were finalized as the archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Cologne, and the secular rulers of the Palatinate (Rhineland), Saxony, Brandenburg and Bohemia. The

1 Simultaneously, the Empire was also involved in German expansion to the north and east, internal dynastic wars, and crusades. Readers will find relevant material in MAA 311, *German Medieval Armies 1100-1300;* MAA 494, *Forces of the Hanseatic League 1200-1500;* FOR 11, *Crusader Castles of the Teutonic Knights (1): Prussia 1230-1466;* FOR 19, *Crusader Castles of the Teutonic Knights (2): Latvia and Estonia 1185-1560;* and WAR 124, *Teutonic Knight*.

Reconstruction: a dismounted knight of one of the northern cities' communal armies in the later 12th century, during Frederick Barbarossa's campaigns in Italy. The similarity to the armour of the previous century is striking: a 'conical' helmet with a large nasal bar, a mail *hauberk* with an integral hood and face-flap (*aventail*), and a 'kite-shaped' shield. This would also have been the appearance of a feudal knight (*miles*) in Norman southern Italy in the same period; only the shorter *hauberk* and mail mittens differentiate this man from a soldier of the Norman Conquest of England or the First Crusade. The completeness and modernity of a knight's war gear naturally depended upon his wealth; if well cared-for, valuable armour could last for many decades, passing down through the generations of a family. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva).

dynamics of power shifted constantly: to become Emperor, a king needed to negotiate the support of the electors and the pope, but without yielding too much power to any of them. The pope needed the protection and cooperation of a strong Emperor, while retaining some control over his actions in Italy. The nobility wanted a strong and able king, but not so strong that he could reduce their autonomous privileges. The Church had great wealth, prestige and powers of international patronage; the struggles between Papacy and Empire were political, but popes often used the excommunication of rulers ('separating them from God', and thus cancelling their legitimacy) as a political weapon – and a powerful one, at a time when most Europeans were more or less devout believers.

Since the days of the first Emperor, Charlemagne (r. 800-814), northern Italy had been subject to the Empire. However, from the early 11th century their increasing wealth from trade fuelled the rise of embryo city-states *(comuni),* and as these expanded their territory at the expense of surrounding regional rulers they also demanded greater autonomy from the imperial government. The south of the peninsula had remained under Lombard rulers inland, with Byzantium originally retaining coastal regions, which also came under periodic attack from Arab-occupied Sicily.

The Norman ascendancy in the south

Norman mercenaries had served the Byzantine Empire since the end of the 10th century, and their prowess soon led to their employment by the Lombard principalities in southern Italy. Here both Lombards and Byzantines were exhausted by years of low-level conflict, and from about 1030 the vigorous Normans began to acquire their own territories. Early papal attempts to organize resistance against them failed in 1053, when a Norman army under Humphrey of Hauteville defeated a largely German mercenary army at the battle of Civitate. Pope Leo IX was captured, and by 1059 he had recognized Humphrey's kinsman, Robert Guiscard, as Duke of Apulia and Calabria. In that year the Normans took Capua, in 1076 Salerno, and in 1079 Benevento. Meanwhile they were also capturing coastal duchies: Naples, Sorrento, Gaeta, and the important 'maritime republic' of Amalfi. After a three-year siege, in April 1071 (just four months before Byzantium's disastrous defeat by the Turks at Manzikert), Guiscard had taken Bari, the capital of Byzantine Italy.

In 1091 the Normans finally conquered Arab Sicily, but the island and continental southern Italy continued to be ruled as two separate entities until 1130. In that year, with the agreement of the pope, both Norman territories were united into the new Kingdom of Sicily under the rule of Roger II of Hauteville.

The rift between Empire and Papacy

In 1075, relations between Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII broke down over the 'Investiture Controversy', provoked by an aggressive proclamation by the pope regarding their relative powers. Henry was

initially humiliated; in 1081 he vengefully marched on Rome, but was repulsed when Gregory summoned Robert Guiscard up from the south to relieve the siege. A temporary accommodation was reached between Gregory's and Henry's successors at the Concordat of Worms in 1122, but it was not to last. The Papacy steadily extended its secular rule over most of central Italy, pursuing manipulative diplomacy with all the European powers.

The Salian imperial dynasty which had ruled from 1024 died out in 1125, and after a brief interregnum Conrad III of Swabia, first of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, was nominally elected Emperor. In fact Conrad was a weak ruler, who paid scant attention to his Italian possessions (which anyway never recognized him), but that all changed with the succession to the German and imperial thrones in 1152–55 of his nephew – the formidable Frederick I 'Barbarossa', or 'Redbeard'.

CHRONOLOGY

1024 Emperor Henry II of Saxon imperial dynasty dies, succeeded by Conrad II as first of Salian dynasty.
1030 Normans obtain their first foothold in southern Italy, the county of Aversa.
1053 Decisive Norman victory over papal coalition army at Civitate.
1059 Normans capture Lombard principality of Capua.
1068–71 Normans besiege and capture Bari from the Byzantines.
1073 Normans capture Amalfi. Election of Pope Gregory VII.
1075 Pope Gregory's *Dictatus Papae* challenges powers of Emperor Henry IV.
1076 Normans capture Lombard principality of Salerno. Pope excommunicates Emperor, leading to rebellions in Germany.
1077 Pope Gregory lifts excommunication after Emperor submits to humiliating terms at Canossa. (Subsequently excommunications became almost routine, and few are noted hereafter.)
1078 Normans capture Lombard principality of Benevento.
1081 Emperor Henry IV besieges Pope Gregory in Rome; siege raised by Norman army.
1091 Normans complete conquest of Muslim Sicily.

1122 Concordat of Worms temporarily settles dispute between Empire and Papacy.
1130 Roger II of Hauteville founds Kingdom of Sicily, incorporating Norman territories in southern Italy and Sicily.
1138 Conrad III elected Emperor, beginning Hohenstaufen dynasty.
1152 Conrad's nephew Frederick 'Barbarossa', Duke of Swabia, elected King of the Germans.
1153–4 Frederick Barbarossa launches first Italian campaign, intending to reinforce imperial authority in north and to attack Kingdom of Sicily.
1155 Obtaining submission of Milan and destroying Tortona, Frederick reaches Pavia, where he is proclaimed King of the Romans (April). On reaching Rome he is crowned Emperor Frederick I by Pope Adrian IV (June). Unrest among German dukes forces him to return home.

The German nobleman Henry, Duke of Anhalt (*c.*1170–1252), wrestling an opponent out of his saddle in one of several miniatures from the *Codex Manesse* that show battle scenes – though in this case the presence of an audience identifies it as the mêlée during a massed tourney or mock battle. His surcoat, and the trapper or 'barding' of his horse, are shown as blue scattered with silver 'studs'; the shield motifs show (left) a white eagle on red, and (right) yellow and black bars. His red and white crest is topped with fans of peacock feathers. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

1158 Barbarossa leads second Italian campaign, crushing rebellion of Milan.
1159–60 Death of Adrian IV leads to election of rival popes Alexander III (who allies with Sicily against the Emperor), and Victor IV (recognized by the Emperor). Alexander excommunicates both the 'anti-pope' and the Emperor; the latter's army is defeated by the Milanese at Carcano.
1162 Barbarossa's third campaign ruthlessly crushes another Milanese rebellion, prompting submission of other northern cities. Further progress is thwarted by:
1164 Formation of anti-imperial *Lega Veronese* (Veronese League) under patronage of Venice, including *comuni* of Padua, Verona, Vicenza and Treviso.
1166 Emperor Frederick launches fourth Italian campaign (October).

This miniature from the *Codex Manesse* shows Henry, Duke of Breslau (c.1258–90), surrounded by his attendants, being crowned at a tournament. The Codex is a magnificently illustrated book dating from 1304–40, holding a collection of German courtly poetry and songs. The German *Minnesingers* paralleled the French chivalric tradition, and many noblemen and knights were celebrated for their literary as well as their military prowess. The Codex illustrates knights wearing armour reminiscent of the 13th century, with mail *hauberks* and crested 'great helms', and displaying family heraldry. The folios reproduced in this book simply represent a cross-section of German imperial knights during the heart of our period. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

1167 Emperor besieges Ancona. Victory of small but professional imperial force over much larger Roman communal army at Monte Porzio (May) forces flight of Pope Alexander. Emperor enters Rome, installing 'anti-Pope' Paschal III, but disease in his army forces withdrawal. Formation of anti-imperial *Lega Lombarda* (Lombard League) under patronage of Milan, including Ferrara, Lodi, Parma and Piacenza. Later the same year the former *Lega Veronese* is absorbed into this *Lega Lombarda*.
1168 City of Alessandria, named after pope, is founded largely by Milanese refugees.
1174 Emperor Frederick leads fifth Italian campaign against northern cities.
1175 Imperial siege and assault of Alessandria fails.
1176 Emperor wounded during decisive victory of Lombard League army of infantry and cavalry over all-cavalry imperial army at Legnano (May). Barbarossa is obliged to negotiate with Pope Alexander.
1177 Peace of Venice between Empire, Papacy and Lombard League.
1183 Final Peace of Constance defines relationship between Empire and northern city-states.
1189 Third Crusade begins: Emperor leads army overland towards Holy Land through Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Anatolia into Cilician Armenia.
1190 Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa drowns when thrown from horse in Saleph river (June).
1191 Barbarossa is succeeded as Emperor by his son Henry VI, who is married to Constance of Hauteville, heiress to the Kingdom of Sicily.
1194 Emperor Henry VI also becomes King of Sicily.
1197 Death of Henry VI; his infant son Frederick of Apulia succeeds to Kingdom of Sicily under regency of his mother. Disputed elections for King of Germany cause ten years of internal turmoil.

1209 Otto of Brunswick elected King of Germany, and crowned Emperor Otto IV by Pope Innocent III, but loses papal support following an invasion of Italy.
1211 With papal support, 16-year-old Frederick of Apulia is elected *in absentia* as King of Germany (September), though Otto continues to hold sway in northern Germany.
1212 Frederick II is first crowned King of Germany in Mainz (December); coronation will be repeated in Aachen (July **1215**).
1218 Death of Otto IV.
1220 Despite papal misgivings about unprecedented concentration of power under one monarch, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II crowned in Rome by Pope Honorius III, and his son Henry receives title King of the Romans.
1222–24 Frederick II fights eventually successful campaign against Saracens in Sicily.
1225–26 Revival of Lombard League.

1229–30 Frederick II fights brief war against papal forces in southern Italy.
1237 Frederick II defeats Lombard League at battle of Cortenuova.
1238 Frederick's subsequent refusal to negotiate terms provokes continuing resistance by Milan, Bologna and Piacenza.
1239-43 Imperial (Ghibelline) campaigns against Papal supporters (Guelphs) throughout Italy.
1245-47 Pope Innocent IV declares Frederick II deposed as Emperor, provoking rebellions in Italy and Germany.
1248 Imperial army besieging rebel city of Parma is routed and treasury lost, encouraging more widespread resistance.
1250 Death of Emperor Frederick II, followed by collapses of imperial power in both Italy and Germany.
1254 Death of Frederick II's son Emperor Conrad IV leads to chaotic interregnum until **1273**.
1259 Large pro-Papacy Guelph coalition defeats and kills pro-imperial Ghibelline leader Ezzelino da Romana at battle of Cassano d'Adda.
1260 Ghibelline army led by Siena defeats much larger Guelph army led by Florence at battle of Montaperti.
1266 With papal encouragement, Charles of Anjou, younger brother of King of France, successfully invades Kingdom of Sicily, then ruled by Frederick's bastard son Manfred of Swabia; Manfred is defeated and killed at battle of Benevento.
1268 Angevin victory over last supporters of Swabian dynasty at battle of Tagliacozzo. Capture and execution of Conradin, 15-year-old son of Conrad IV, brings Hohenstaufen line to an end.
1271 Charles of Anjou founds subject Kingdom of Albania, centred on city of Durazzo (Dyrrachium).
1273 Rudolf of Habsburg, a Swabian count, is elected King Rudolf I of the Romans.
1274 Papal States absorb county of Romagna, including city of Bologna.
1278 Rudolf gains power over Austria and Styria by victory over Bohemians at battle of the Marchfeld.
1282 Sicilian revolt against Angevin rule begins with so-called 'Sicilian Vespers' assassinations, and rebels seek help from King Pedro III of Aragon in eastern Spain. Beginning of 20-year Angevin-Aragonese wars in southern Italy.
1284 Maritime republic of Pisa defeated by Genoa at battle of Meloria; thereafter Genoa becomes Venice's main maritime rival in the Mediterranean.
1289 Tuscan Guelph army led by Florence defeats Ghibelline army led by Arezzo at battle of Campaldino, cementing Florentine dominance over central Italian cities.
1292 Adolf of Nassau elected King of the Romans.
1298 Albert of Habsburg, son of Rudolf I, elected King of the Romans.

Taking part in the imperial siege of Florence under Emperor Henry VII in 1312, Count Wernher of Homberg, who died in 1320, rides under a banner of two black eagles on yellow, with a red streamer. The device is repeated as shields on his pink surcoat and trapper, and as *ailettes* at his shoulders; note too his black swan crest. One enemy infantryman (bottom left) carries an ochre shield with Florence's red *fleur-de-lys*. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

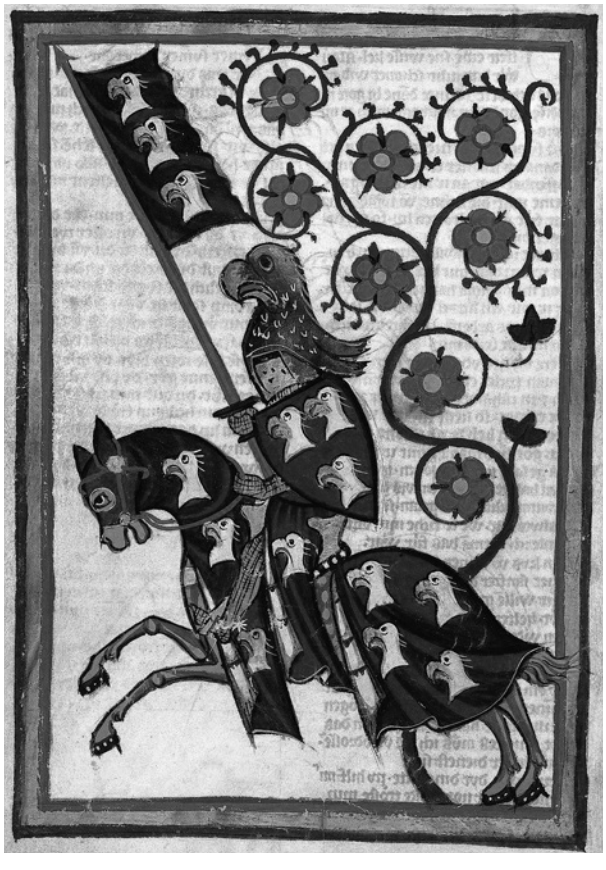
1299 Angevins defeat Aragonese in sea battle off Cape Orlando.

1302 Peace of Caltabellotta between Angevins and Aragonese: southern Italy will be ruled by Angevins as 'Kingdom of Naples', while Aragon retains island of Sicily.
1308 Henry VII elected King of the Romans.
1312 Henry VII elected as first Emperor since Frederick II.
1314 Disputed election of Bavarian ruler Louis of Wittelsbach as King of the Romans leads to internal wars against Frederick the Fair of Habsburg.
1320–23 City of Lucca eventually victorious in war against Florence.
1327–28 Louis IV is elected King of Italy and Holy Roman Emperor.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY OF FREDERICK BARBAROSSA, 1155-1190

A folio from the *Codex Manesse* richly decorated with roses, representing the knight Hartmann of Aue (*c.*1160–1210). The bird's head motif is silver with a gold beak on a dark blue ground, but is grey and gold in the three-dimensional helmet crest.

For an Emperor to convince feudal knights to follow him on an expedition into Italy was not straightforward; sometimes he had to offer lands and titles to individuals in order to raise sufficient men. Another difficulty was the absence of up-to-date records of each great lord's military capabilities, since the most recent documents of this kind dated back to the 11th-century Saxon dynasty. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)



The difficulties of raising armies

In the 12th century the 'pyramidal' feudal military organization found in, e.g., France and England was not yet well established in Germany, where a few great lords had bilateral obligations negotiated directly with the Emperor. In order to recruit forces for a campaign the Emperor needed formal approval from the assembly of these 'princes', known as the *Reichstag*; after obtaining this, he could request the military service of their knights. The period of service varied according to the theatre of operations: 40 days for a campaign conducted in Germany (*Reichsheerfahrt*), and up to 410 days for an expedition into Italy (*Romfahrt*).

Generally, the various great magnates had concluded agreements with Emperors that limited their contingents to service inside Germany, and they usually paid cash sums in lieu of actually taking part in an *expeditio italica*. The only rulers who habitually demonstrated loyalty to the Emperor were the 'princes of the Church', because archbishops, bishops and abbots were appointed directly by him. For instance, in 1174 Frederick Barbarossa led into Italy an army including the contingents of three archbishops, ten bishops and two abbots.

In rare cases of emergency, for example if German territory was threatened by a foreign invasion, the Emperor could call upon not only the contingents of the great nobles but all free men; this general mobilization was known as *Heerban*. The usual kind of mobilization, involving knights only, was known as *Folgepflicht*. Generally, Barbarossa's Italian expeditions were conducted by small armies formed only from knights and their squires; once on Italian territory, however, this imperial cavalry was supplemented by allied contingents sent by the loyal cities. These included a certain number of knights, but more important were the solid Italian urban infantry.

The records of the 1174 campaign give an idea of the strength of an imperial army mobilized for war in Italy: on that occasion Barbarossa led an army of 8,000 knights and 12,000 auxiliaries (squires and infantrymen). He was the first Emperor who tried to force the various princes to respect fully their imperial military obligations, gradually eliminating the various limitations on the employment of their contingents, and forbidding the substitution of money for service. Barbarossa pressed these reforms particularly after his defeat at Legnano during his confrontation with the Lombard

League in 1176: shortly before that battle, his cousin Henry the Lion – the immensely powerful Duke of Saxony and Bavaria – had refused to send his contingents to Italy to reinforce Frederick's army. Thereafter, each German prince was given a precise number of knights to be sent in case of war; these would serve for a standard period of six weeks, which could be increased to three months if necessary, though if this happened the expense of maintaining them passed from their lords to the monarch. By 1180, Frederick Barbarossa had effectively introduced functioning feudalism over most of Germany.

Imperial armies of this period were essentially composed of knights; infantry had a very secondary role, and were usually limited to a few badly-equipped retainers following their lord to war. A partial exception to their auxiliary and passive role on the field of battle was represented by infantry contingents from the territories of Saxony and Thuringia. Since the Saxon imperial dynasty these two regions had been famous for their foot archers; armed with 'longbows' (a later term), they had been fighting for centuries against the nomadic peoples who raided the eastern borderlands of Germany.

Wolfram of Eschenbach (*c.*1170–1220) displays his symmetrical heraldic motif, in black on dark red, on his shield, crest, banner and horse trapper, but his surcoat is shown as plain dark blue. The split and tied sword-belt is carefully depicted. (*Codex Manesse, Digital Library,* Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

Mercenaries

Given the difficulties of raising enough knights, various Emperors were often obliged to employ mercenaries. In the late 11th century Henry IV, facing difficult civil wars following his excommunication, had been the first to recruit mercenaries in large numbers. Sometimes these professional troops were paid by princes who wished to avoid committing their own contingents, but on most occasions they were paid directly by the Emperor.

During his Italian campaigns Frederick Barbarossa mostly employed Brabantine mercenaries from the Low Countries: these were professional heavy infantrymen, much hardier and better equipped than the usual peasant foot soldiers in the feudal contingents. Barbarossa had a high opinion of Brabantines, who proved to be both loyal and ferocious in battle. For the campaign of 1174, in particular, he could count on a large number of Brabantines who were temporarily unemployed after taking part in the English civil war fought between Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Ministeriales

In addition to mercenaries, the Holy Roman Emperors could also count on a separate category of non-noble knights (in that word's sense of mounted,

armoured men-at-arms), known as *ministeriales*. These were linked to their lords by a sort of legal bondage, which included most of the main features of a normal vassal-lord agreement of the time. From a formal point of view, however, German lords 'owned' their *ministeriales:* originally free men, they had 'sold' themselves to a prince in order to improve their conditions of life. First introduced during the reign of Conrad II, the *ministeriales* were initially civilian officers performing a range of administrative functions, but over time their masters started to use them as a source of replacements for the princes' free knights. The profession soon became hereditary, leading to the birth of a new social category. On most occasions the *ministeriales* proved to be extremely loyal and professional, and were particularly appreciated as commanders of castles and strategic towns. Often *ministeriales* passed from the service of one nobleman to another after a certain period, being literally 'sold' by their owners.

Following this example, the Emperors also started to form personal retinues of these non-noble knights. Being now part of the imperial administration, they could receive lands from the monarch, but these could not be inherited by their sons. By around 1170 most imperial *ministeriales* had lands and titles exactly like the noble knights, and continued to show a higher degree of loyalty towards the Emperor than the knights of the regional princes' contingents.

Reconstruction: communal knight of modest means, serving in a Lombard League army at about the time of the battle of Legnano in 1176. For the flat-topped helmet with attached face mask, see under Plates A1 and C1. At this date the *hauberk* was typically worn over a padded *gambeson* with long sleeves. (In this text we use *gambeson*, but over time and distance many different terms were used for the padded garments worn under metal armour or as 'soft armour' in its own right, and these may indicate distinctions that we no longer understand.) The apparent 'trousers' are footed woollen hose with separate legs, suspended by laces from a waistbelt worn with the underclothes – *braies*. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva).

Vassals and allies

Finally, Barbarossa could also count on some contingents sent by vassal and allied monarchs, from the Duchy of Bohemia and the Kingdom of Hungary.

Bohemia had been part of the Empire since 1002, and Bohemian dukes had to send military contingents like all its German lords. By the reign of Barbarossa the military traditions of Bohemia and Germany were practically identical, though it was noted that Bohemian knights generally had lighter personal equipment than their German equivalents – this being mostly due to the military influence of the nomadic peoples living on the steppes of eastern Europe. Duke Vladislaus II, on the throne of Bohemia since 1140, sent forces to support Frederick during the Emperor's Italian campaign of 1154; in return, Bohemia was transformed into a kingdom and Vladislaus was elected King of Bohemia in January 1158. After his coronation he remained one of Barbarossa's most loyal allies; he accompanied the Emperor during the Italian campaign of 1158, and sent contingents for those of 1161, 1162 and 1167.

The Magyar monarchy of Hungary ruled a fully independent state at the time of Frederick Barbarossa. Géza II, King of Hungary since 1141, sent a contingent to help Frederick during the campaign of 1158, but was later unable to continue his military support due to an internal rebellion by his brothers. The influence of the steppe peoples was even stronger in Hungary, where knights generally had very light defensive equipment.

Tactical organization

For tactical purposes the German knights of Frederick Barbarossa were organized into small units known as *conrois*. Each *conroi* comprised roughly 30 mounted men, deployed in three ranks of ten riders. Generally the first line was composed of noble knights, and the second included *ministeriales*, while the third was made up of the squires of the noble knights. Apart from reflecting social differences, this disposition also made practical sense. The squires in the rear rank were lightly equipped, with only a spear and shield, and their only function during a charge was to exploit any gaps in the enemy ranks opened by their heavily armoured lords.

12TH-CENTURY COMMUNAL ARMIES OF THE NORTHERN CITIES

Wealth breeds ambition

Since the beginning of the 11th century, some of the important cities of northern Italy had started to enjoy a new economic power. Thanks to their flourishing commerce, several had seen notable increases in population, and a new wealth that far outstripped that of the Empire's German cities. Their commercial and social elites resented the levels of taxation imposed by the imperial authorities, and began to aspire to more political autonomy.

During this period each city (*comune*) started to develop its own representative institutions, challenging the dominance previously exerted by the great nobles holding castles in the surrounding countryside, and by the bishops. Each city assembly elected two supreme magistrates (*consoli*), who ruled for a fixed period of time, but during the 13th century internal political struggles involving these consuls became frequent. Consequently, the consul started to be replaced by the *podestà*: this was generally a man from a different city (and thus supposedly neutral between local urban factions), who was appointed to administer the *comune*.

Each commune had its own armed forces or *milizia*, divided into two categories of troops: the *milites* and *pedites*. The *milites* were knights drawn from the urban aristocracy that dominated the city government – either 'old' noblemen, whose families had moved from the countryside into cities in some numbers during the 11th century; or 'new' aristocrats risen from the rich mercantile class (*'milites pro commune'*). The *pedites* (infantrymen) came from the middle and lower social classes, but all were considered as citizens, and had some of the same civic rights as the rich; politically, the urban society of the *comuni* was fairly democratic, albeit by the robust standards of that time.

Usually, despite the growing wealth of the merchant class, the *milites* were a small minority within each city. However, since most northern Italian cities had large and growing populations, and every free and able-bodied citizen was obliged to serve, each

Reconstruction: Italian infantry spearman of a communal militia at about the time of Legnano. His only protection is an old-fashioned 'nasal' helmet, a kite-shaped shield and a fairly thinly padded *gambeson,* and he carries a simple mace tucked in his belt for close fighting. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva).

Reconstruction: poor communal archer of the Lombard League in the last quarter of the 12th century. Completely unprotected, he is armed with a selfwood or 'long' bow and a heavy dagger, though some seem to have had hardened leather caps and short swords. At this period, archers still far outnumbered the more expensive crossbowmen; during the century that followed the latter would achieve first equal numbers, and then a majority, formed into organized and disciplined companies within urban militia armies. Simple archery was then probably limited mainly to the conscripted peasants from the *contado* or rural territory surrounding a city. (Author's collection, courtesy of Antichi Popoli)

was generally able to deploy a quite numerous militia. Such service was closely linked with political representation, thus increasing the incentive to serve. To give an idea of the military capabilities of the most important of all the Italian cities: by the time of the battle of Legnano (1176), Milan had 80,000 inhabitants, and could deploy a total of 15,000 militiamen (3,000 knights and 12,000 infantry). Since roughly one in every six inhabitants was eligible for military service, even the smallest *comuni* were generally able to deploy at least 1,000–1,500 fighting men.

Organization and training

Militia units were formed according to the internal subdivisions of a city, with each neighbourhood raising companies of cavalry and infantry for assembly into the communal army. Neighbourhoods or quarters, which most often numbered six, were known by different terms in different cities (e.g. six *porte* or 'gates' in Milan, six *sestieri* in Florence, but three *terzieri* in Siena). Deriving from practices in the Byzantine period, each quarter usually formed one company of cavalry and one of infantry, but sometimes more in larger cities.

Again with local variations, the infantry was structured in *venticinquine* of 25 men, and the cavalry in ten-man *decine*. (However, in Perugia both foot and mounted companies were *decine*.) Each militia company was commanded by its *capitaneus*, and had a distinctive *gonfalone* banner. We know that Milan's militia deployed 130 companies: 36 of knights (six for each *porta)* and 94 of infantry (one for each parish of the city).

The infantry companies were trained by *magistri* – experienced veteran soldiers, who helped the *capitanei* to instil battlefield discipline. In battle the most experienced fighters had the important role of keeping the infantry in ordered formations; these equivalents to modern NCOs were known variously as *serragenti, distringitori* or *guardaschiera*. Neighbourhood unit training was normally conducted each Sunday after religious services, but during festivities or on special occasions there were joint exercises involving the companies from all quarters. These *battagliole* were important for the creation of *esprit de corps* above company level, and took the form of small mock battles fought with wooden weapons between units from different neighbourhoods.

Mobilization

City militias could be mobilized in two different ways, according to need. In case of full-scale war, all the companies were called up to serve, though those from one neighbourhood were left behind to garrison the city; this kind of general mobilization was known as *exercitus* (army). For lower-intensity conflicts, for example with one neighbouring city, only the companies from some of the neighbourhoods, selected by rotation or by drawing lots, were called up in a kind of partial mobilization termed *cavalcata*. The *exercitus* was raised only in rare emergencies; the full mobilization of all able-bodied citizens naturally put serious burdens on the commune's economic and productive life, since the militiamen were not full-time soldiers but pursued all the civilian professions in peacetime. The *cavalcata,* however, might be raised frequently; in fact, from the early 11th century most Italian *comuni* seemed to be almost constantly at war with their neighbours. In such cases the knights played a more important role than the infantrymen, but during general mobilizations – signalled by the ringing of parish church bells and the display of distinctive banners – the *pedites* made up the bulk of the communal army.

The imperial knight Ulrich of Lichtenstein (*c.*1200–1275) displays a particularly elaborate crest. The female figure has a gold crown and hair and a pink or mauve gown, and holds a red arrow and a gold torch with red flames. Ulrich's surcoat and trapper are green scattered with triple silver 'studs', and decorated with shields halved red, over yellow with blue chevrons, like the blazon on his actual shield. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

The *rurali*

At the beginning of our period the countryside was still dominated by great feudal lords, but during the 12th century numbers of these rural aristocrats were defeated in struggles for power with the cities, or sent at least their younger sons to go and live inside the nearest urban centres. Consequently, many cities became powerful enough to expand their rule over the surrounding territory (their *contado*), to the point of being able to include large numbers of rural peasants in their military structures. The military incorporation of these *rurali* was a long and complex process, which led to the birth of two new categories of troops: the *scutiferi*, and the *bubulci* or *zafones*.

The *scutiferi* included those yeomen farmers who had the means to maintain a horse of common quality (a *ronzino*), and to buy some elements of personal military equipment. These 'rich peasants' served as light cavalrymen when mobilized, and were apparently considered to be on a social and military level comparable to the noble knights' squires. In battle the *scutiferi* prepared the way for the militia heavy cavalry by harassing and skirmishing, and during *cavalcata* operations

Reconstruction: dismounted communal knight from Pisa, early 13th century, wearing a helmet with a facial mask. He displays simple early heraldic identification on his surcoat and 'heater' shield; these colours are the red and white of the city's Della Gherardesca family. (Author's collection, courtesy of Pisa Ghibellina)

they were well suited for raiding the farmlands around the opposing city. By contrast, the *bubulci* or *zafones* were provided by the poorest rural peasants, the former being employed as labourers (pioneers), while the latter served as auxiliary light infantry. In time, however, and particularly during the 13th century, *rurali* began to be incorporated into the urban infantry companies, usually as pioneers or more skilled combat engineers (*guastatori*). Each rural subdivision or *vicariatus* was assigned to a quarter of the city, providing such men for its infantry companies.

The *carroccio*

The proud identity of each *comune* was represented by its *carroccio*, a large, four-wheeled, ceremonial ox cart; this was first invented in 1037 by Bishop Aribert of Milan, and progressively adopted by all Italian communes. On campaign it served as a combined observation and command post, field chapel and rallying-point. It carried an altar, where priests performed services before battle; the standards of the city and of its patron saint; a number of trumpeters, and often a superstructure with one or more bells, to transmit commanders' orders.

The *carroccio* soon became the most important symbol of the commune's liberties; losing it in battle was considered as the greatest possible dishonour, so every city formed a special military unit whose function was to protect it. The city of Milan, for example, created two different guard units to defend the *carroccio*: according to popular tradition, the first was formed of 900 knights (the *Compagnia della Morte*, 'Death Company'), and the second of 300 heavy infantrymen. According to more recent research, however, it seems that the 'Death Company' only existed during the 1176 Legnano campaign, and its story was exaggerated by later chroniclers.

The Veronese and Lombard Leagues

After 1160, in view of Frederick Barbarossa's new campaigns against the Italian cities, several of them decided to unite into temporary military leagues. The first of such alliances, known as the *Lega Veronese*, was formed in 1164 under the patronage of Venice, and included *comuni* from the March of Treviso: Padua, Verona, Vicenza and Treviso. Three years later, in April 1167, Milan formed the new and much more powerful *Lega Lombarda*, including Ferrara, Lodi, Parma and Piacenza. The Lombard League's creation and later expansion was encouraged by Pope Alexander III. In December 1167 the Veronese League was absorbed into the Lombard League, and during the following years many other

cities joined this military alliance created under the patronage of Milan: Alessandria (a new city founded in 1168 to honour the pope, which soon became the symbol of Italian independence from the Empire), Asti, Bergamo, Bologna, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Mantua, Novara, Pavia, Reggio, Tortona and Vercelli.

THE NORMAN ARMY OF THE KINGDOM OF SICILY

Feudal mobilization

After decades of political fragmentation, in 1130 the whole of Norman southern Italy and Sicily was united under the rule of Roger II of Hauteville, who with papal support formed the Kingdom of Sicily. From a military viewpoint the new kingdom soon became one of the most important states in Europe; the rigid system of feudalism introduced by Roger II created a centralized monarchy, with the military forces under direct control of the royal family.

In 1140, at an assembly of his noblemen commonly known as the Assize of Ariano, Roger II promulgated the founding laws of the kingdom. According to these, the power of the Norman nobles was to be absolute in their own feudal fiefs, but was to be completely subject to the authority of the king in all matters regarding the general administration of the state. All the Norman lords were to receive their lands and privileges *'in capite'* – that is, the monarch was formally the sole owner of the whole territories of the kingdom. He could deprive his vassals of lands and privileges at any moment, if they rebelled against his rule or refused to fulfil military obligations.

According to the organization now adopted, the feudal forces of the kingdom could be mobilized in three different ways, according to need: by *equitatura, expeditio*, or *adiuvamentum regni*. The *equitatura* was a partial mobilization of feudal troops in a particular area, to conduct small-scale local operations such as the suppression of a rebellious nobleman. The *expeditio*, usually employed for campaigns outside the kingdom, was the normal form, involving only feudal contingents provided by the various nobles for a standard duration of 40 days. Finally, the *adiuvamentum regni* was the total mobilization used in such emergencies as a foreign invasion: this involved all the feudal troops of the kingdom, in contingents of double the normal strength and with no limit on the duration of their service. It additionally called up non-feudal troops – mostly free men from the major cities, but also peasants living on state-owned lands.

All the knights of the new kingdom could be divided into two main categories: the *milites* and the *milites stipendiarii*. The first were the feudal knights from aristocratic families; the second were non-noble knights paid to serve the king – not common mercenaries, but professional soldiers quite similar to the German *ministeriales*. In many cases these non-noble knights were ex-Lombard or ex-Byzantine soldiers who had passed into Norman service, being mainly employed to garrison state-owned lands and castles or in the king's personal retinue *(familia regis)*.

RIGHT
Reconstruction: knight of a 12th-century feudal contingent in southern Italy, as he might appear while called up for *equitatura:* limited royal service to crush a local rebellion. He still closely resembles the Norman *miles* of the 11th century; here he has dismounted, slung his shield, unlaced his *aventail*, and carries a simple mace – perhaps to deliver the *coup de grace* to a fallen enemy? (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

FAR RIGHT
Reconstruction: archer, mid to later 12th century, Kingdom of Sicily – perhaps a humble member of a rural knight's feudal following. Contact with Islamic neighbours, and King Roger II's employment of Arab mercenaries, had led to the use of the superior composite reflex bow in southern Italy. In the 1230s, Frederick II's employment of Arab archers resettled from Sicily would provide him with fast-shooting missile troops who were much more mobile in battle, and thus more suited to offensive tactics, than the powerful but slow crossbowmen, who had to be protected with *pavises*. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

Feudal knights and auxiliaries

In 1150-52 a special office of the royal government created a uniquely detailed register known as the *Catalogus Baronum* – an example which would soon be followed by the rulers of other states. The 'Catalogue of Barons' listed all the king's feudal vassals living in the Kingdom of Sicily, with an exact description of the lands and privileges of each nobleman and of his relative military obligations; this would be updated at regular intervals. The number of knights that each vassal had to provide was calculated according to the economic revenues derived from the lands in his possession; the unit of measurement used for this process was the *feudum integrum* or *feudum militis,* roughly corresponding to 20 ounces of gold – considered as the sum needed to provide a good warhorse and full equipment for a heavy knight. A *feudum non integrum* was a fief of lesser value, and all such minor vassals were obliged to pool their resources with others in order to raise the sum needed to field a heavy knight between them. Knightly military service was personal, and exemption could not be secured by paying a cash fee.

In addition to knights, the feudal lords also had to provide a fixed number of auxiliary soldiers, calculated on the same principles; these might be *servientes, pedites* or *balistarii.* The *servientes* were the knights' squires, who had to serve as light cavalrymen. *Pedites* infantrymen and *balistarii* archers were the usual retainers (mostly peasants) who followed their feudal lords on campaign.

The king's retinue

The military organization of the kingdom was completed by the *familia regis* – a small but formidable private retinue under direct control of the king and royal family, and led by an officer termed the *maestro connestabile*. It included a certain number of employed professional knights *(milites stipendiarii),* whose loyalty to the royal house was absolute, and it could also field a good number of Arab mercenary infantrymen and archers from Sicily or Tunisia. Roger II was the first Norman king to employ Arab mercenaries, whom he considered the bravest and most loyal of all his soldiers. Since they had no links with the local aristocracy, they could be employed with confidence against any internal rebels.

Commanders

From 1149 the kingdom was divided into ten military and administrative areas known as *connestabilie*: to each of these the king appointed a senior military officer, the *connestabile regio*. In the case of total mobilization these constables were responsible for assembling and leading the non-feudal forces raised from state-owned lands. Generally, command of the feudal military forces from their territories was exercised by the Norman counts, though when on campaign each count was assisted by an experienced *connestabile comitale* appointed by the king.

Frederick, Count of Leiningen, who died in 1237, is depicted here in a spectacularly graphic scene of combat, with blood spurting from his enemy's cloven helm. The count's surcoat and horse trapper are yellow, his heraldic device a larger above a smaller white spread eagle on azure blue, and his crest a branch of green ivy leaves. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

THE ARMY OF FREDERICK II, 1220–1250

Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, grandson of Frederick I Barbarossa, was the son of the Emperor Henry VI and Constance of Hauteville, who was Queen of Sicily as the last legitimate heiress of that dynasty. Consequently, Frederick II became King of Sicily in 1198, and Holy Roman Emperor in 1220. In some ways he was thus the most powerful monarch in Europe, uniting under his rule both the German knights of the Empire and the Normans of the Kingdom of Sicily.

Frederick II's mother did not long survive his father, so his dangerous childhood was spent as more or less a hostage of several rival regents. Remarkably, he grew up to become not only an able and energetic monarch, but a multilingual intellectual, a patron of the arts and an innovative administrator, who was described by a contemporary as *stupor mundi* – 'the

The Emperors made much use of infantry mercenaries from the feudal territory of John, Duke of Brabant (*c.*1252–94). Seen here leading a charge, he has a spectacular helmet crest of a mythical chimera in gold, breathing red flames. The horse trapper is red, bearing the quartered arms also seen on his shield and banner: red rampant lions on white, and gold lions on black. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

Wonder of the World'. While he inherited from Barbarossa a reactionary ambition to bring the cities of northern Italy back under effective imperial rule, he also had imaginative ideas regarding the Mediterranean world. Growing up in Sicily, he became fascinated by Islamic culture, and dreamed of uniting the Christian and Muslim traditions in peaceful cooperation. Needless to say, this world-view was unacceptable to most of his contemporaries, but it was reflected in Frederick's organization of his military forces. These incorporated German, Norman Sicilian, Arab and Italian components, each employed to exploit its particular characteristics. This complex apparatus was under the Emperor's direct command, though with the practical assistance of a senior officer with the title of *marescallus.*

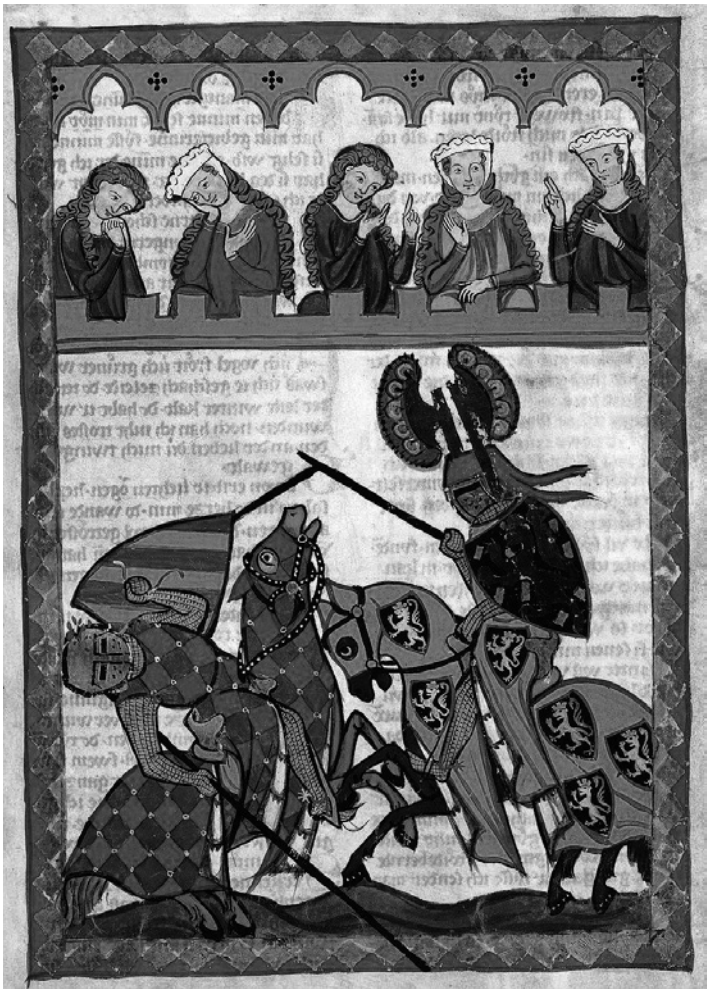
From feudalism to professionalism

Soon after assuming power, Frederick II understood that the great German magnates had little interest in sending their feudal troops to serve his ambitions in Italy – and he himself was never much interested in German affairs, spending most of his life in his southern domains. In order to avoid the disappointment that had caused his grandfather's defeat at Legnano, Frederick decided to abolish personal military service for the German lords of the Empire. In 1232 he promulgated his *Statutum in Favorem Principum,* which granted German lay and ecclesiastical princes of the Empire complete autonomy within their own lands, while substituting financial payments for their imperial military obligations.

This achieved two important objectives: it eliminated most possible pretexts for rebellions in Germany, and created a regular source of funds with which to pay *ministeriales* and mercenary knights *(milites stipendiarii).* These made up a far greater part of his German heavy cavalry than noble *milites,* and feudal contingents sent by the princes of the Empire always remained a minor component of his armies. At this time Germany was full of knights who lacked titles or feudal fiefs, so were always in search of military employment. During Frederick II's reign these professionals started to form *banderie* or *connestabilie*: each *connestabilia* was a unit with about 25 mercenary knights led by a *connestabile,* who

hired out their services to the most generous employer.

While the army of the Kingdom of Sicily retained its Norman organization without any significant change, Frederick II usually avoided raising contingents of feudal knights from the *Catalogus Baronum*. The Norman nobles never fully accepted the suzerainty of a Swabian over their kingdom, and thus were always potentially rebellious, so Frederick tried to create something similar to the German *ministeriales* for the Kingdom of Sicily. These *milites de Apuliae* were a new category of professional knights to whom the Emperor granted lands in Apulia, the richest region of the kingdom. They were mostly Swabian *ministeriales,* or northern Italian knights who had been expelled from their home cities because of their imperial sympathies (these exiles being commonly known as *milites forestati*). While few in number, the *milites de Apuliae* proved to be very loyal to the Emperor, to whom they owed their estates and often their lives. The Emperor also tried to improve the logistics of his southern army, creating state weapons factories (*camere reali*) and stud-farms for the breeding of warhorses (*aratie*).

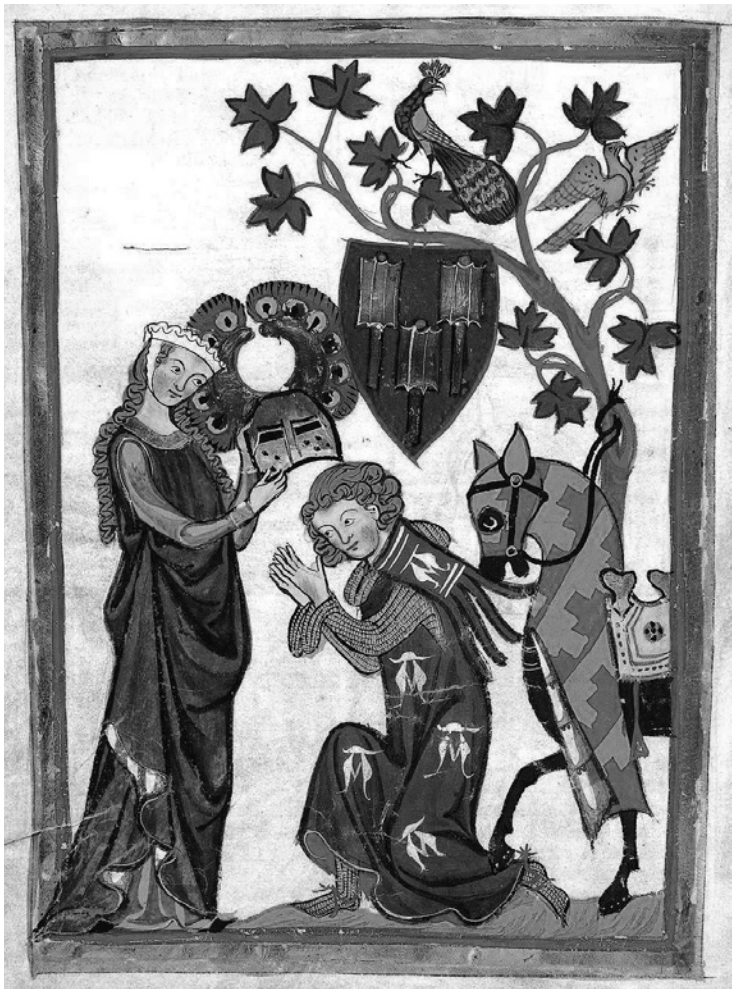


A gallery of ladies positively swooning with admiration watch Walther of Klingen break a lance as he unhorses a jousting opponent; both wear ringmail armour extending over their hands and feet. Active in the 1240s–80s, this knight is illustrated with a yellow surcoat and trapper bearing arms of a gold-crowned white lion rampant on a black shield edged with red. His actual shield is black, but no charge can be made out other than small gold rectangles in an asymmetrical pattern. His helmet crest is fashioned from peacock feathers mounted on battens. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

Regarding tactical units, during this period heavy knights started to abandon the traditional practice of charging in distinct *conrois*: now they were deployed on the battlefield in two or three long ranks including hundreds of mounted men. In addition, the practice of dismounting to fight, which had still been quite common during Frederick Barbarossa's time, was increasingly abandoned in the early decades of the 13th century due to the new and heavier armour employed by knights.

'Saracen' forces: the Lucera archers

An important element in Frederick II's armies was powerful contingents of Arabs (Saracens, in the contemporary term). A minority were mercenaries from overseas, but most were originally from the mountainous hinterland of the island of Sicily, where their communities had been more or less ignored after the conquest of 1091. Frederick II was the first monarch who tried to subjugate them, but these excellent light infantrymen and archers, masters of their terrain, resisted his superior forces for two years and inflicted heavy casualties. They so impressed the Emperor with their martial qualities – and particularly their mastery of the powerful Islamic composite bow – that after the Arab surrender in 1224 he resettled those who had submitted, with their families, in Apulia, where they were allowed



This very chivalric image represents Conrad of Limburg, a knight of the mid-13th century, being handed his peacock-crested helm by a lady to whom he has pledged his devotion. As with the next-generation knight Henry of Frauenberg (see page 41), his heraldry shows mixed colours. His dark blue shield bears what appear to be three mace-heads in light grey with brown shafts; his horse's trapper is yellow with red crenellated bands; but his surcoat is green with white characters. Note the hanging mittens and hood of his mail armour. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

to follow their Islamic faith in peace under Frederick's direct protection.

These transplanted Muslims soon created what was essentially a military colony at Lucera, and most of the Arabs who subsequently served with the imperial army were notably loyal subjects of the Emperor. A certain number of warriors from Lucera were even included in Frederick II's *familia regis*. He knew that he could count on them in any situation, since they could even be employed against the forces of the Papacy. Moreover, their outstanding archery gave him a key tactical superiority when confronting the communal armies of northern Italy. At Legnano in 1176 the knights of Frederick Barbarossa had not been able to break the shield-walls created by the Milanese infantry; at Cortenuova in 1237, Frederick II's 7,000 Saracen archers would defeat the infantry of the Lombard League with a rain of arrows.

In about 1240 the colony of Lucera had some 40,000 inhabitants, and a state factory *(ghazena)* producing hundreds of composite bows each year. In time the Lucera Saracens also started to produce and employ crossbows, although in smaller numbers. It seems that a certain proportion of them also had horses for transport, though they dismounted to fight. The Arabs well understood that the survival of their flourishing colony in southern Italy was linked to the destiny of the Hohenstaufen family. When the Angevins invaded in 1266, Lucera mobilized every able-bodied man for service under Frederick's son Manfred of Swabia; at the battle of Benevento he fielded no fewer than 10,000 of them, in 1,000-man divisions known as *acies*. During the period 1266–1300 the Saracen colony of Lucera continued to contribute several thousand archers to the defence of the kingdom, until it was wiped out by the Angevins.

Italian forces: the army of Ezzelino da Romano

Frederick II's northern Italian forces were commanded by his most powerful ally in the peninsula, Ezzelino III da Romano, who was the heir of an important German noble family which had settled in the March of Treviso during the 10th century. When his father died in 1226 Ezzelino inherited part of the family's territories, including Bassano, Marostica, and the rich hill region known as the Colli Euganei. Being both a capable military commander and politically ambitious, Ezzelino soon understood that the only way to expand his territories was by fighting on the side

In this detail Count Albert II of Haigerloch, who died in 1298, is depicted at the heart of a chaotic and savage combat, with blood flying from his sword. The crest of two opposed horns is halved dark green over red; the same colours are repeated in the shield motifs on his light green surcoat and horse trapper. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

of the Emperor against the free *comuni*. During the period 1225–30, as *podestà* of Verona, he transformed that city into one of Frederick II's most important allies in northern Italy.

In 1236 the Emperor received decisive military support from Ezzelino during his most important Italian campaign, and rewarded him with the recently-conquered city of Vicenza. A year later the Lombard League was defeated by Frederick and Ezzelino at Cortenuova, and the years that followed saw Ezzelino reaching the peak of his power in northern Italy. He conquered Padua (1237), Trento (1241) and Brescia (1258), forming a real *signoria* or personal domain in the March of Treviso, and taking the important city of Treviso itself for his brother Alberico.

However, after the death of Frederick II in 1250 Ezzelino found himself practically alone in the fight against the *comuni* and the Papacy, and Pope Alexander IV launched a crusade to destroy his *signoria*. Powerful cities such as Bologna and Venice supported this campaign; the latter, in particular, sent a powerful river fleet and an elite contingent of crossbowmen. Ezzelino was able to defeat this military coalition on several occasions, but when Milan also joined the papal alliance he was doomed. In 1259 Ezzelino was decisively defeated, and mortally wounded, at the battle of Cassano d'Adda.

The army of Ezzelino da Romano was a high-quality combined force comprising four distinct components: the feudal contingents from Ezzelino's family dominions, the militias of the cities that he conquered over the years, a small contingent of Saracen archers sent by Frederick II, and *connestabilie* of German mercenary knights.

The most trusted core of this army was Ezzelino's feudal contingents from the hills of the Colli Euganei, whose soldiers were known as *pedemontani*. He usually distributed these elite troops among the various divisions of his army, in order to provide each with a reliable backbone.

In addition, *pedemontani* were frequently employed in small numbers to conduct special operations. The troops from Bassano, Marostica and the Colli Euganei included both *milites* knights and *pedites* infantry, the former playing the more prominent role. Ezzelino's feudal infantry were mostly missile troops, especially slingers, who became famous for their skill with the *cazafrustum* – a sling mounted on a staff up to 2 metres long, which imparted superior power and range.

Ezzelino naturally had little trust in urban militias from conquered *comuni,* and took measures to weaken their cohesion. The militia from a single city was never fully mobilized; each was required to send the companies from two or three quarters only, which were deployed in mixed divisions with those from other communes. Ezzelino even formally forbade the use of a city's symbolic *carroccio*. When serving together with Frederick's imperial army the infantry of Ezzelino's urban contingents were mostly employed in auxiliary roles, e.g. as sappers, or as skirmishers raiding the countryside.

Saracens from Lucera served with Ezzelino's army from 1236, when Frederick II sent him an elite unit of 300 Arab archers. Strangely, considering them too few in number to be decisive on the battlefield, Ezzelino employed them only as trustworthy garrison troops. He divided them into small groups of 10 or 12 men, and distributed these between some of the most important castles under his control. Ezzelino had a high opinion of the German *milites stipendiarii*, and although these too were usually few in numbers he always employed them as the shock troops of his forces. Mostly sent and paid by Frederick II, they also formed Ezzelino's personal guard.

13TH-CENTURY COMMUNAL ARMIES

Sergeants, crossbows, pavises, and military societies

The early decades of the 13th century saw the introduction of several new elements to the traditional military organization of the Italian *comuni*.

The *capitaneus* of an infantry company – who was usually a merchant, a wealthy artisan, or a younger son of a noble family – began to be assisted on a regular basis by two NCOs called *serragenti* (sergeants). In the field, these veterans of proven quality were deployed behind the tactical formation to keep it in good order; they also had a secondary function in peacetime, as a sort of urban gendarmes to maintain the peace. The basic infantry company was still a 25-strong *venticinquina,* of 21 militiamen deployed in three ranks and seven files, with the two sergeants, one standard-bearer and one captain. Only the first rank carried large shields.

During the first decades of the 13th century the crossbow began to be used on a regular basis by urban militiamen. To protect crossbowmen during the reloading process, a new category of infantrymen emerged: the *pavesieri*, equipped with large pavise shields that could be propped on the ground. Since they also carried long polearms and were often heavily armoured, these soldiers soon became an elite within communal militias.

During this same period, the Italian cities first gave birth to military brotherhoods known as *società d'armi*. These were formed by active

Reconstruction: communal knight of about the time of the battle of Cortenuova (1237). It was common to wear a simple, bowl-shaped *cervelliera* helmet over the mail hood and underneath the 'great helm', which had thick doughnut-shaped internal padding so that all the layers could be strapped or laced on securely. This man is probably a *miles pro commune* – i.e. a knight in the tactical sense of being a mounted man-at-arms, but without the social status of one who had been dubbed a knight by his feudal lord. In cities such as Florence a chronic shortage of noble knights led to the 'tactical' knighthood being opened to any who could afford a warhorse and armour. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

citizens who had some political, professional or devotional interests in common, and were comparable to the civic *corporazioni* guilds of artisans or merchants. 'Societies of arms' might also be formed by foreign communities living in a city – for example, the military brotherhood of Tuscans living in Bologna. Members of these groups also acted as urban policemen in time of peace, and were responsible for garrisoning sections of the city walls; each society had its own emblems and distinctive banner. They, too, came to be considered as a sort of elite in the military structure

Reconstruction: communal crossbowman of the Lombard League, early to mid-13th century, protected by a *chapel-de-fer* and a *gambeson* with an additional extended hood around the neck and shoulders. It was during the early 13th century that the crossbow began to appear regularly in the hands of city militiamen; it was both relatively quick to master, and dangerous against armoured cavalry at practical battle ranges. Being quite expensive, at first crossbows were purchased by communal administrations for issue in time of war. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

of each city: in Milan, from 1228, a brotherhood called the *Società dei Forti*, formed by knights who fought on foot, were entrusted with the defence of the city's *carroccio* on the field of battle.

Social class distinctions

Importantly, during the 13th century the urban populations became more stratified into four main social classes: *magnati, popolo grasso, popolo minuto* and *plebe*. Political power was still firmly in the hands of the first two classes, who controlled all the communal institutions. However, the lower middle class (*popolo minuto)* was just starting to claim a more important role in the public life of each *comune*, which led to internal class struggles within most Italian cities during this century.

The *magnati* (magnates) were the urban nobles, while the *popolo grasso* (literally, 'plump people') were an upper middle class who also provided knights. Before being fully accepted among the communal knights, the younger non-noble *milites pro commune* often had to prove their courage by serving in a battle as *feditori*: generally with lighter equipment than other knights, these launched the first charge against the enemy.

The *popolo minuto* was the lower middle class, whose members formed the great bulk of the communal armies as infantry militiamen, including the elite contingents of crossbowmen, *pavesieri* and *società d'armi*; the latter were essentially created by the *popolo minuto* to resist abuses by the ruling classes. By contrast, the *plebe*, or poorest citizens, had no role in the political life of the city. This lowest class was part of the military organization only in the sense of being employed as pioneers or sappers.

Cavalry reorganization

The first decades of the 13th century also saw important modifications to the organization of the communal cavalry. The traditional categories of *milites* and *milites pro commune* were joined by two new types: mounted sergeants, and *berrovieri*.

The mounted sergeants were cavalrymen from the *popolo minuto* class, having lighter equipment than the knights. Frequently these were professional soldiers who had the financial means to buy a horse of modest quality and some defensive equipment, but not a purpose-bred warhorse and full heavy armour. In battle, the mounted sergeants were deployed behind the *milites* to support the decisive charge of the heavy cavalry. With the passage of time they steadily became more numerous and important, while simultaneously the knightly *milites* class entered a long period of decline.

The *berrovieri*, for their part, were the direct heirs of the former *scutiferi* – rural peasant light cavalrymen from the countryside surrounding a city.

(continued on page 33)

BARBAROSSA'S ARMY, 1154–1176
1: Imperial *miles*
2: Heavy infantryman, Pavia
3: Saxon archer
1
2
3

LOMBARD LEAGUE ARMIES, 1167–1237
1 & 2: Communal militia *pedites*
3: Milanese knight
1
2
3

FREDERICK II'S ARMY, 1220–1250
1: *Ministerialis*
2: Saracen archer, Lucera
3: *Berroviere,* March of Treviso
1
2
3

BATTLE OF MONTAPERTI, 1260
1: Florentine *pavesiere*
2: Farinata degli Uberti
3: Sienese infantryman, San Martino

BATTLE OF CAMPALDINO, 1289

1: Slinger, *contado* of Arezzo

2: Florentine *feditore,* Cerchi family

3: Bishop Guglielmino degli Ubertini of Arezzo

BATTLE OF MELORIA, 1284
1: Genoese crossbowman
2: Pisan knight, Delle Brache family
3: Pisan naval infantryman

ARMY OF ANJOU, 1266-1325
1: Lorenzo Acciaiuoli
2: Provençal infantry *serjeant*
3: Albanian archer, Dyrrachium
1
2
3

ARMY OF ARAGON, 1282-1325
1: Catalan knight
2: Catalan crossbowman
3: Almogavar light infantryman
1
2
3

Their military tasks included protecting the borders of the *contado* from enemy incursions, and raiding the rural territory of neighbouring cities; scouting; preparing ambushes; and foraging in search of supplies. The first Italian commander who successfully employed *berrovieri* on a regular basis was Ezzelino da Romano. In Ezzelino's March of Treviso they would remain part of the communal armies, but during the second half of the 13th century most *berrovieri* started to act as mercenaries, hiring out their services to various cities. After the end of a military campaign they might then become a serious menace: left without a paymaster, they ravaged the countryside as bands of brigands.

Finally, it is interesting to note that during the second half of the 13th century some Italian cities started to deploy companies of mounted crossbowmen. Apparently these were initially created in response to the high mobility of Frederick II's Saracen archers, being a sort of mounted infantry who rode into battle but dismounted to fight.

Reconstruction: communal heavy infantry equipment of the early to mid-13th century: a *cervelliera* (left) or *chapel-de-fer* helmet, mail body armour, and a large *tavolaccio* shield, which provided effective protection to men fighting in the front rank but was not so unwieldy as a *pavise*. He has discarded his polearm and drawn his sword; its quality, and the fact that he has acquired a handed-down coat of mail armour, might set him apart among the lower middle-class militiamen from the city's *popolo minuto.* Perhaps he is a member of a *società d'armi* or military brotherhood formed by members of an artisans' guild? (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

THE TUSCAN ARMIES AT MONTAPERTI, 1260

Florence

The military organization of Florence and Siena for this battle between them on 4 September 1260 is a perfect example of how the cities of northern and central Italy went to war in the second half of the 13th century (see also under Plate D).

RIGHT
Reconstruction: communal archer of the early to mid-13th century, wearing a lamellar leather corselet over a *gambeson*. As late as the battle of Montaperti (1260) the communal army of Florence still fielded two 500-man companies of archers, alongside the same number of crossbowmen. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

FAR RIGHT
Reconstruction: dismounted communal knight from Pisa, *c.*1260, when a Pisan contingent was sent to assist Siena. He displays the heraldry of the *consorteria* led by the rich and influential Della Gherardesca family: the Ghibelline black imperial eagle on yellow ground, halved with red over white.

A generation later the then head of that family, Ugolino della Gherardesca, provides us with an example of the risks involved in the family and factional feuds that occupied the lives of many Italian leaders at least as much as the overall struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines (during which they also quite often changed sides). Ugolino was one of the two deputy commanders under the Pisan *podestà* Alberto Morosini at the sea battle of Meloria in 1284 (see under Plate F). Unlike Morosini, he escaped the disaster, and soon made himself the dictator of Pisa, but his power was fiercely contested. In March 1289, after being captured by his enemies, Ugolino, two of his sons and two grandsons were deliberately starved to death on the orders of the Archbishop of Pisa, Ruggieri degli Ubaldini. (Author's collection, courtesy of Pisa Ghibellina)

The six neighbourhoods or *sestieri* of Florence were each divided into parishes – *popoli*. In total the city had 57 parishes, and each of these was required to form a 50-strong militia infantry unit; this *cinquantina* was assembled from two separate *venticinquine* companies. Parishes too small to form their own *cinquantina* joined together to do so, but the largest *popoli* might each form more than one; consequently, Florence could field a total of 160 *cinquantine*. These were divided into 20 *compagnie* (in effect, 400-strong battalions) each of eight *cinquantine*. Under full mobilization Florence could thus field an army with 8,000 *pedites*. On the field of battle each *cinquantina* was deployed with one of its *venticinquine* in the first line and the other in reserve.

Exceptions included 2,000 missile troops *(tiratori),* who were organized separately in four 500-man *compagnie*, two of crossbowmen and two of archers, each formed of ten *cinquantine*. The city's six neighbourhoods were paired, each pair providing one of Florence's three companies each of 100 elite *pavesieri*. The 200-strong guard of the *carroccio* also had its own organization, being formed of 152 *pedites* and 48 *milites* selected on merit from all the city's parishes.

The Florentine cavalry was organized in a completely different way. Each family of the nobility and upper middle class was obliged to send a certain number of knights, according to its financial means. These military obligations or *cavallate* could be performed in person or by providing a suitably equipped substitute. The families were divided according to their city neighbourhoods, each *sestiere* providing a certain

number of cavalry *venticinquine* according to the number of knightly families living in that quarter (noble families maintained fortified tower houses inside the city). In 1260 Florence was able to deploy a total of 800 urban knights in 32 *venticinquine*, plus 500 mercenary knights.

The *plebe* of Florence contributed to the war effort by forming six non-combatant auxiliary corps of pioneers or transport drivers: the *palaiuoli, picconari, marraiuoli, zappaiuoli, mulattieri* and *ribaldi*. In addition to these, the plebs also formed an elite unit of combat engineers known as *devastatori*: these 200 men were mostly employed to destroy enemy fortifications, but also as raiders in the countryside.

Outside the city, Florence's own *contado* was divided into six territorial districts corresponding to the urban *sestieri*, each district being divided into *pivieri*, the rural equivalent of parishes. Each *piviere* had to send a certain number of militiamen to the army, according to its population. In total, the number sent by the Florentine *contado* was roughly 8,000, all of whom were employed in non-combatant auxiliary roles like the urban plebs.

Reconstruction: dismounted knight of the late 12th or early 13th century. After the battle of Civitate (1053) the Normans became the main military allies of the Papacy. During the reign of Frederick II, however, when the Kingdom of Sicily came under Hohenstaufen rule, the popes had to rely mostly on mercenaries from northern Italy. The arrival of Charles of Anjou in 1266 led to the massive employment of French mercenary knights, but from 1282 the outbreak of war in the south between Anjou and Aragon greatly reduced this source, since most of them were recruited by the Angevins. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

Siena

In many ways the military organization of Siena was similar to that of Florence, though the city was divided into three *terzieri*, each of them subdivided into smaller administrative districts known as *contrade* (the equivalent of Florence's *popoli*). At the time of Montaperti, Siena had 53 *contrade*, each of which had to provide a *compagnia* of 200 militiamen. Again as in Florence, the smallest *contrade* had to join forces with others in order to raise a 200-man company. In total, the 53 *contrade* were able to raise 42 *compagnie*, thus giving Siena 8,400 infantry. Again as in Florence, missile troops were organized separately, in four battalions (three of crossbowmen and one of archers) having 400–500 men each.

Siena's urban cavalry was recruited according to the same system of *cavallate* used in Florence; in total, it could deploy 400 knights organized in 16 *venticinquine*. In wartime the *plebe* of Siena formed two different auxiliary corps: the *guastatori* (equivalent to Florence's *devastatori*), and the *mastri falegnami e lapicidi* (military artisans). The *contado* surrounding Siena was able to raise 3,000 militiamen, but unlike their Florentine counterparts these were employed as combatants like the city's other infantry.

Finally, we should note that both the armies of Florence and Siena at the battle of Montaperti included allied contingents sent by various Tuscan cities. By 1260 Florence was the leading centre of the Guelph League (sponsored by the pope), and was supported at Montaperti by

Reconstructions: mid-13th-century communal infantrymen. From about this period the sources show the quilted *gambeson* with additional neck protection – see Plate B1. The 'nasal' helmet was surprisingly long-lived in some regions, but the broad-brimmed, open-faced *chapel-de-fer* is seen worn by infantry in period sources from *c.*1250. Well before the end of that century it was also being chosen by some knights – see Plate E2 – for whom protection always had to be balanced against the need for vision and ventilation, and it would remain in use all over Europe for more than 200 years. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

allies from Perugia and Orvieto. For its part, Siena was supported by Terni, Pisa and Cortona; the city was also the most important Tuscan ally of Manfred, King of Sicily and son of the late Frederick II, who sent 800 German *milites stipendiarii*. These professionals proved to be decisive in the eventual victory of the outnumbered Ghibellines.

In 1260 both armies also included a certain number of *milites forestati*, exiled knights who had been expelled from their cities during the clashes between Guelphs and Ghibellines. Some 200 exiled knights from Florence and Arezzo fought with great courage for Siena at Montaperti, led by the Florentine exile Farinata degli Uberti. They were also instrumental in persuading some countrymen in the Guelph ranks to change sides at a late and decisive stage of the fighting.

THE PAPAL STATES & MARITIME REPUBLICS

Armies of the papal territories

In addition to the military structures of the *comuni* and the Kingdom of Sicily, medieval Italy saw the development of two other systems: that of the Papal States, and that of the Maritime Republics. The Papal States covered most of central Italy except for Tuscany, and during the 13th century various popes continued to expand their control over bordering regions in the centre of the peninsula. In 1274 Pope Gregory X obtained the rich and strategic County of Romagna (including the city of Bologna) from Rudolf of Habsburg, in exchange for acknowledging him as Holy Roman Emperor. With this important acquisition the Papal States became the second largest power block in Italy after the Kingdom of Sicily.

The various papal territories were governed by officials known as *rettori* (rectors), but, like the other Italian regions, included both large feudal areas ruled by leading noble families, and free *comuni* such as Bologna and Perugia. The first papal grant of land on a feudal basis is dated to 999, while the first 'sub-infeudation' of subordinate knights

took place under Hadrian IV (1154-59); as a result, the popes could always count on several hundred heavy knights provided by the feudal lords of central Italy, who were usually available for a month's military service. Nevertheless, it seems that the papal *rettori* preferred to rely on efficiently organized military contingents sent by *comuni*. The military obligations of these papal *comuni* were not very onerous, however; any city could easily reject a summons or substitute a cash payment for direct military service. When a papal summons was accepted, the cities generally sent only part of their forces (the militia companies of just one or two quarters); periods of service also varied, and it was almost impossible to employ urban militias outside their own province. Consequently, the popes were frequently obliged to rely heavily on contingents of mercenaries – in the 11th–12th centuries mostly Normans, in the early 13th century largely northern Italians, during the 1260s–1280s mainly French, and thereafter Italians again. The cities in papal territory could either hire these themselves or simply send their exemption fees to the papal authorities, and by the early 14th century papal armies were almost entirely composed of mercenaries.

Reconstruction: 13th-century communal infantryman, his thighs protected by quilted *cuisses* suspended from an internal waist belt, with domed knee-protectors of hardened leather. Although they are popularly associated with the 15th century, the use of small applied heraldic 'livery' badges seems to have been known in Italy as early as the 1280s – see Plate F. The pattern, thickness and manufacturing details of *gambesons* varied enormously. Some infantrymen wore them over mailshirts – mail was initially expensive, but easy to repair, and lasted literally for centuries if carefully oiled against rusting. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

Venice, Genoa and Pisa

Coastal city-states had started to flourish during the 10th century, and later became the most important naval powers in the Mediterranean Sea. The extensive trade networks created by these maritime *comuni* obviously needed military protection, and the four republics of Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa and Venice developed their own military structures based on sea-power. Amalfi had a very short-lived period of glory, declining after its capture by the Normans in 1073. Pisa remained quite important until 1284, when the battle of Meloria marked the triumph of Genoa as the main maritime power on the Tyrrhenian Sea. During the following centuries, right up until 1797, the republics of Venice and Genoa remained independent and extremely wealthy. The military organization of Venice, Genoa and Pisa was not very different from that of the other *comuni*, but obviously had some variations due to the emphasis on naval warfare.

The military institutions of Venice were regularized, on the basis of existing practices, in 1171. The republic's forces were of three different categories: the *forza ordinaria, forza sussidiaria*, and *forza straordinaria*. The 'ordinary force' was the city militia, including all able-bodied citizens aged 17–60; these were paid during their obligatory military service, which might last from two to six weeks at a time, and was mostly performed aboard warships. The city was divided into six *sestieri*, each of several parishes; each parish formed a certain number of 12-man militia infantry *duodene*. In case of mobilization, each *duodena* in theory had to send from one to three of its members; usually, in fact, only one-twelfth of the *forza ordinaria* was called up for service, with the members of each *duodena*

The plain red surcoat, not matching the ground colour of his heraldry (black fishes on dark blue), suggests an early 13th-century date for Wachsmut of Kunzingen. Nothing is known about this knight, beyond a suggestion that he may have come from either Clemency in the Ardennes or from Luxembourg. (*Codex Manesse,* Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

who remained behind contributing for the pay and equipment of the man who served. A militiaman selected for service could pay for a substitute to take his place.

The *forza sussidiaria* was formed of the Venetians who lived in the republic's overseas colonies and of the local inhabitants of those territories; however, members of this 'subsidiary force' could only be employed as ships' crews and not as naval infantrymen. The *forza straordinaria*, mobilized only in emergencies, consisted of temporarily-hired mercenaries.

Genoa was traditionally divided into eight quarters known as *compagne,* which were paired in four couples to perform military duties. Again, there were three categories of troops. An active militia was formed of professional soldiers paid by the republic (mostly crossbowmen, but also knights); a reserve militia was formed by all able-bodied citizens, mobilized according to their *compagne* only in cases of real emergency, when mercenary troops were also recruited from outside the republic.

Genoa could thus count on a central military force composed of professional soldiers; mostly crossbowmen *(balistari)* serving on warships of the Genoese fleet, they were organized into 20-man companies *(bandiere)* commanded by a *connestabile*. Whether he came from Genoa or from elsewhere each professional soldier was paid and treated by the republic as a mercenary, for terms of service varying from three to six months. Professional crossbowmen were recruited by two noblemen appointed by the communal authorities; if an enlisted crossbowman proved unable to perform his duties, the officer who had recruited him had to reimburse the state out of his own pocket. During our period Genoese crossbowmen became a real elite, being employed as mercenaries in most of the major armies of the time, and particularly playing a key role in the French armies of the 14th century.

The Tuscan *comune* of Pisa had a peculiar military organization. In the various quarters of the city there were several noble families who had abandoned the countryside during the previous decades, adapted to a mercantile life, and were now important figures in the urban community. Each family gradually developed its own network of commercial and personal relationships (known as a *consorteria*). Each *consorteria*, led by a noble family, formed its own companies of militia crossbowmen or naval infantrymen – a sort of feudal military organization, but adapted to an urban environment.

THE ARMY OF ANJOU

Milites, *serjeants* and *ribaldi*

In 1266 Charles of Anjou, younger brother of the French King Louis IX, invaded the Kingdom of Sicily with the blessing of the pope, and defeated Frederick II's illegitimate son Manfred at the decisive battle of Benevento. After several decades of Swabian rule, southern Italy now passed under control of another foreign royal house. Charles was the richest and most powerful nobleman in France, having under his personal rule several important regions: Anjou, Maine, Hainaut, Forcalquier and Provence. Anjou was the home region of the Angevin royal family, while Provence was then probably the richest region in France.

Charles arrived in Italy at the head of a large feudal army, including three main categories of troops: *milites* (knights), *serjeants*, and *ribaldi* (auxiliaries). The *milites* might be either feudal knights from Charles's personal territorial possessions, or minor rural nobles from northern France. The latter were generally younger sons of the French aristocracy who had no fiefs, and thus were searching for lands and titles. They were under no feudal obligations towards Charles, but followed him simply in hope of becoming the new aristocracy of the Kingdom of Sicily. After the campaign of 1266 French knights who had followed Charles indeed became the most important nobles of the kingdom, though they had to integrate themselves with the existing nobility. The latter continued to perform military service according to the *Catalogus Baronum*.

Walther of Metze was another *Minnesinger* knight of whose career nothing is known, apart from the fact that he was dead before 1276. His heraldry shows a red ground with checkered bars of dark blue and dark purple, and a crest of gold-based blue wings. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

The *serjeants* may be described as non-noble professional soldiers; this category included both a sort of lighter cavalrymen and heavy infantrymen, who, like the unfiefed knights, joined Charles's military adventure in search of loot and rewards. Apparently, 600 of them were equipped as mounted crossbowmen and operated as a sort of mounted infantry. The *ribaldi*, by contrast, were auxiliary infantrymen with light equipment and little training, recruited from the cities of southern France or as part of knights' feudal retinues. In either case, they had a very secondary role on the battlefield.

The Angevin invasion army of 1266 comprised some 12,000 men: 600 *milites*, 2,400 mounted sergeants, and 9,000 infantry (roughly half-and-half foot sergeants and *ribaldi*). Charles's enterprise was only possible thanks to the decisive financial and political support of the pope. The Church sent large sums of money to pay the *serjeants* and *ribaldi*, and presented the war against Manfred of Swabia as a crusade, promising the remission of sins to men who joined it. During most of the period covered

by this book the Angevin kings could also count on large numbers of knights coming from northern Italian cities; these might be either exiles *(milites forestati),* or part of allied contingents sent by important Guelph cities like Florence, Charles's greatest Italian ally.

Mercenaries

After the outbreak of the war against the Aragonese in 1282, the Angevins were obliged to rely mostly on *milites* and *serjeants* coming from Charles's feudal possessions in southern France, since the military contribution of the southern Italian nobility remained as modest as it had been under Frederick II and Manfred. It was exactly in this Angevin period that the practice of paying sums of money in place of military service – known locally as *adohamentum* or *adoa* – started to appear in the Kingdom of Sicily. Soon, however, the number of feudal reinforcements coming from France proved inadequate for the harsh campaigns fought against the Aragonese; consequently, the Angevins started to send an increasing number of recruiting agents throughout all the regions of France to hire substantial groups of mercenaries. Significant numbers of these also came from northern and central Italy.

Administration

The Angevins divided the Kingdom of Sicily into territorial subdivisions known as *giustizierati*, each under the control of a *giustiziere* – a civilian official appointed by the king. In time of war he was responsible for the recruiting of soldiers and gathering of supplies inside the borders of his *giustizierato*. The king was commander-in-chief of the army, assisted during military campaigns by two senior officers: the *magister conestabulus* commanding all the land troops, and the *marescallus,* who was responsible for important administrative and logistic functions, including the supply of money and horses and the administration of military justice.

THE ARMY OF ARAGON

'The Sicilian vespers'

The Sicilian nobility resented the Angevin conquest of the south; after decades of economic and cultural prosperity under the Swabians, the island was reduced by Charles of Anjou to a subordinate role. The new monarch transferred the capital of the kingdom from Palermo to Naples, and rewarded many of his French followers with Sicilian titles and possessions. The leading Sicilian nobles, obliged to share control of the island with these ambitious newcomers, found their political importance greatly reduced. In addition, the first years of Charles's rule saw campaigns in the Balkan territories of the former Byzantine Empire, leading in 1271 to the foundation of the Kingdom of Albania – a vassal state of the Kingdom of Sicily, which included most of the coastal areas of central and southern Albania. These campaigns demanded a constant flow of money, mostly raised by taxing the rich Sicilian communities.

This simmering unrest flared into insurrection in 1282. On 30 March of that year, after the sunset prayer or vespers, the population of Palermo rose in open revolt against the French, and coordinated assassinations

of Frenchmen initiated widespread massacres. Within a few weeks the whole island was in the hands of the rebels; the Sicilian cities asked the pope to recognize them as free *comuni*, but this was refused, since the Church remained strongly allied with Charles of Anjou. With the Angevins assembling an army for the reconquest of the island, the Sicilians understood that their only realistic option was to seek yet another foreign intervention, and they approached the eastern Spanish kingdom of Aragon, then a great naval and commercial power in the Mediterranean. King Pedro III of Aragon, married to Manfred of Swabia's daughter Constance, was happy to champion his wife's claim to the crown of Sicily.

After the arrival of the Aragonese in Sicily the so-called 'War of the Sicilian Vespers' developed into a wider European conflict, which saw fighting on several fronts between the Angevins and Aragonese. In 1302, after 20 years of warfare had brought the Angevins close to total defeat, the pope supervised the treaty of Caltabellotta. Under its terms, Sicily was to remain an independent kingdom under the control of Aragon, while continental southern Italy would remain under Angevin rule as the Kingdom of Naples. The two entities would be unified again only in 1442, by an Aragonese conquest of Naples from the last Angevins.

Many of the folios in the Codex are prominently decorated with roses. The gentle effect is sharply contrasted here by the clawed crest of Henry of Frauenberg, an imperial knight active between 1284 and 1305. His colours are *chevronny* purple and white, while his shield blazon is a dark-gold griffon on dark blue. (*Codex Manesse*, Digital Library, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek)

Aragonese forces

The army shipped to Sicily during 1282 included several categories of troops. Cavalry, almost entirely feudal, included two main types: the *armados*, heavy knights provided by the leading aristocracy of Aragon, and more lightly equipped *aforrados* – roughly equivalent to the Angevin *milites* and mounted sergeants respectively. Each knight was accompanied by four servants-cum-infantrymen, and each sergeant by two.

In addition, the Aragonese cavalry included several contingents of non-feudal light horsemen called *jinetes*. Peculiar to Spanish medieval armies, these mounted skirmishers armed with javelins were recruited in the border regions between the Christian and Islamic territories of the Iberian peninsula. *Jinetes* were a product of the constant state of low-level warfare persisting in these areas during the Christian '*Reconquista*' of Spain from the Moors. *M*odelled on traditional Muslim light cavalry, they would remain a fundamental component of the Spanish cavalry until the first half of the 16th century. These excellent light horsemen

Reconstruction: Tuscan heavy infantry swordsman, mid-13th century. His head, neck and shoulders are protected by an extensive *camail* shaped like the caped hood that, made in woollen cloth, was a common garment throughout medieval Europe from the late 11th to the early 16th century. His *coretto* corselet, gauntlets and greaves are made of thick leather – see also Plate F3. During the late 13th and early 14th century the augmentation of the ringmail *hauberk* with plates of boiled, moulded and hardened *cuir bouilli* on the limbs and eventually the torso became increasingly widespread in Italy and southern France – see under Plate G1. (Author's collection, courtesy of Antichi Popoli)

might be either Muslims serving under Christian monarchs, or Christian soldiers who had learned this way of fighting from their Moorish enemies.

The Aragonese infantry were commonly known as *peones*, but this general term embraced several categories with different equipment: *servents* (crossbowmen), *flexters* (archers), *lanceros* (spearmen), *pavesados* or *escudats* (pavisiers), and *almogavars* (skirmishers). In the 13th century the crossbowmen formed the backbone of the Aragonese fleet's naval infantry, and their reputation was second only to that of the Genoese. They fought in companies numbering between 30 and 50 men, each commanded by an officer known as the *conestable* or *cap*.

The famous Almogavars, lightly-equipped and fast-moving, were more successful than any other foot troops deployed in southern Italy during the war against the Angevins. Like the *jinetes*, they were a product of the centuries-long Iberian struggles between Christians and Muslims: traditionally, they were originally farmers and shepherds in the Christian/Muslim borderlands who had been forced to take to the hills as outlaws, and over the course of time became a class of professional soldiers. They were the first Christians to adopt the Muslim tactics of rapid raiding and withdrawal, travelling without baggage and living off the land in any terrain and weather. Relying upon mobility and stamina, they carried only a small leather bag for food, and were armed with a hunting spear *(ascona muntera)*, two javelins and a Catalan knife *(coltell)*. They received no pay, but regarded warfare as a way of life, rewarded by the loot they took and by the sale or ransom of prisoners.

A company of Almogavars generally numbered about 50 men led by an officer called an *adalid*, chosen partly for his knowledge of the terrain where they operated. They also had NCOs known as *almocadenes*, who could command independent squads of from five to 15 soldiers, which were called *partidas*. Fighting in the mountains of southern Italy, they were often able to inflict defeats on Angevin troops by surprise or night attacks. Typically, they attacked the horses of the enemy knights – once a heavy cavalryman was thrown to the ground, he was relatively easy to kill.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: FREDERICK BARBAROSSA'S IMPERIAL ARMY, 1154-1176

A1: Imperial *miles*

At the time of the battle of Legnano (1176), the protection worn by German heavy knights had hardly changed since the 11th century. Though it usually reached the knees, the dimensions of the expensive ringmail *hauberk* might differ considerably, having elbow-length or, as here, full-length sleeves with integral mittens. A padded fabric *gambeson* and sometimes a long robe were worn beneath the mail, over separate mail *chausses* suspended from a belt to protect the legs and feet. At this period the mail hood (*coif*), worn over a padded cap, was still an integral part of the *hauberk*. This knight's up-to-date helmet is no longer conical, but of semi-spherical two-piece construction, with an integral fixed face mask strengthened with a nasal ridge and pierced for vision and ventilation. The shield is of a transitional shape, between the previous 'kite' and the later 'heater' shape extensively used during the 13th century; its imperial blazon of a black eagle on yellow suggests that he is a *ministerialis*, a non-noble knight in the direct service of the Hohenstaufen family. It is interesting to note that until 1053, the year of the battle of Civitate against the Normans in southern Italy, German knights were still mostly equipped with circular shields, which allowed them to fight either on foot or mounted with equal ease.

A2: Heavy infantryman from Pavia

During the wars between Barbarossa and the other Italian cities Pavia remained a loyal ally of the Emperor, sending contingents to join the imperial army of which their infantry was the most numerous and important component. This well-equipped heavy infantry militiaman comes from the relatively wealthy commercial or artisan class, since he can afford a ringmail hauberk. His helmet is of 'Phrygian' shape, with the apex of the single-piece skull drawn slightly up and forwards, and a riveted-on browband and nasal bar. Note that this spearman has a single mail *chausse* on his left leg – which will be thrust forward by his stance in the battle line, unprotected by the modified 'cut-down kite' shield. Both the shield and the *gonfalone* on his spear bear the white cross on red that identified the Italian cities supporting the Emperor.

A3: Saxon archer

Barbarossa's imperial army usually included archers from Saxony and Thuringia, in the personal feudal retinues of noblemen coming from those regions. This peasant soldier wears his everyday clothing with minimal equipment: a *cervelliera* semi-spherical helmet of riveted construction worn over a fabric *coif*, a traditional 'long' bow of the type used for centuries in northern and central Europe, and a knife at his hip.

B: LOMBARD LEAGUE ARMIES, 1167-1237

B1: Communal militia *pedes*

The equipment of the militia infantry *pedites* varied according to the social class and financial means of the mobilized citizens. Well-off merchants and artisans were generally equipped as heavy infantrymen (see A2), but the majority probably resembled this figure. The universal protection of the poorer infantry was the *gambeson* padded jacket, which was cheap to produce from multiple layers of linen cloth, stuffed with wool, rags or horsehair and quilted to keep the stuffing evenly spread. Such garments varied widely in detail and sophistication, according to the soldier's means. This *pedes* is also wearing a large quilted hood under his old-fashioned segmental helmet. Radiating iron reinforcements are nailed to his 'cut-down kite' shield. Note the use of puttees to give some protection to his legs, and his *falcione* sidearm, as B2.

B2: Communal militia *pedes*

This militiaman has no protection apart from a helmet and a simple, round wooden shield. He may be an artisan of modest means but – to judge from his good-quality tunic, and the fact that he carries a *falcione* or falchion – is not of the poorest class. This simple heavy-bladed 'chopping' weapon, single-edged except for a 'Bowie knife' point, was lethal in close combat. The red cross roughly painted on his shield is a basic identification of the Lombard League army. In the background, note the famous *carroccio* of Milan.

B3: Milanese knight

Judging by the expensive quality of the robe worn under his armour, this *miles* may be an urban aristocrat serving the commune, and his equipment is typical of that used by Italian knights during the campaigns against Barbarossa. Painted helmets became common during the second half of the 12th century; this both protected them from rust and aided identification. Its shape, and the *hauberk* with a mail *coif* laced across the face, are not of the latest design. The 'rounded-off kite' shield bears the colours of Milan, but the red cross on a white ground was soon adopted throughout the Lombard League.

C: FREDERICK II'S IMPERIAL ARMY, 1220-1250

C1: *Ministerialis*

The equipment of the non-noble knights who played such a large part in the armies of 'the Wonder of the World' would have been practically identical to that of the aristocratic feudal *milites*. This *ministerialis* wears an early model of a flat-topped 'great helm' which was seen from the early decades of the 13th century; the originally added facemask is still evident, showing the evolution of this helmet type from that worn by A1. The adoption of closed helmets prevented identification in battle; this led to a rapid growth in heraldry, and by the mid-13th century the use of distinctive family emblems was widespread in France and Germany – not only by the higher nobility, but also by lower-status men-at-arms. Emblems were initially displayed only on the knight's shield (here of the 13th-century 'heater' shape), but were later reproduced on a new garment that was worn over the *hauberk* – the coloured surcoat. In the decades that followed, the heraldic display of each knight would be completed by fixing a three-dimensional crest made of light material to the top of the helm. Here the knight's body and limb armour are unchanged, but his horse is now protected by a ringmail 'trapper'. Its weight would add greatly to the warhorse's burden, so its introduction in the early part of the 13th century must have been prompted by a real threat, presumably from the wider diffusion of crossbows.

C2: Saracen archer from Lucera

The defensive equipment of these archers taken into service by Frederick II was simple: a helmet, either conical or a locally-made *cervelliera,* always with the traditional turban wrapped around it; and a *iuppectum* (quilted jacket). Alternatively, those Arabs who served as infantrymen in Frederick's royal guard might wear the classic lamellar armours employed in most regions of the Islamic world. According to contemporary sources, soon after settling in Puglia these warriors abandoned the production of curved scimitars and adopted the same swords as the Emperor's Christian soldiers. Our figure represents a foot archer; those who used horses to travel on campaign wore soft leather boots. Small circular shields were quite commonly carried, sometimes of exotic appearance – made of rhino-skin, or of wood covered with leopard-skin.

C3: *Berroviere* from the March of Treviso

These light cavalrymen raised by Ezzelino da Romano from the countryside surrounding his cities resembled the earlier rural yeoman *scutiferi*, with simple defensive equipment – here, just a *cervelliera* and an old-fashioned 'kite' shield. The weapons are a hunting spear and a broadsword of good quality.

D: BATTLE OF MONTAPERTI, 1260

This battle on 4 September 1260 was fought between two large coalition forces: perhaps as many as 33,000 Guelphs (numbers in medieval sources are always dubious), led by Florence and supporting the Papacy, against some 17,000 Ghibellines, led by Siena on the side of the Emperor. Both armies included contingents from every corner of central Italy, plus a certain number of mercenaries and political exiles. Arrayed in north-to-south battle lines, both sides deployed their cavalry at the north and their infantry in the centre and south. The Guelphs had a great advantage in numbers, higher ground, and initially the sun in their favour; but skilful deployment of part of a contingent of German knights, and some induced disloyalty among the Guelph ranks, eventually won the Ghibellines a hard-earned victory.

D1: Florentine *pavesiere*

The pavisiers of Florence, an elite unit of the communal army, came from all six *sestieri* of the city, so displayed on their large shields the blazon of Florence rather than those of any particular neighbourhood. Until 1251 this had been a white *fleur-de-lys* on a red ground, but in that year the Ghibelline faction were exiled from the city and took that symbol with them; consequently, the new Guelph authorities adopted the inverted-colour form shown here. As an alternative to the pavise, infantrymen in the first lines could also employ a smaller version of body-shield known as a *tavolaccio* (see illustration on page 33). Our *pavisiere* wears a *gambeson* of excellent quality, coloured red; during the middle decades of the 13th century this kind of 'soft armour' was improved with additional elements such as a quilted collar, and quilted mittens extending from the long sleeves. His helmet is a *chapel de fer* or 'kettle hat', the simple but practical type that became increasingly popular among infantrymen and sergeants (both foot and mounted) in many countries during

the 13th century. Behind him is the famous *'martinella'*, a mobile bell-tower used to mobilize the militia in Florence, which was also transported to the field of battle.

D2: Farinata degli Uberti

In addition to some 800 German *milites stipendiarii* – employed knights – sent by Manfred of Swabia, King of Sicily, the Sienese army also included about 200 exiled Ghibelline knights, mostly Florentines fighting against their own city. These were led by Farinata degli Uberti, a knight from one of the leading families who was famous for his military skills and bravery; his heraldry, incorporating the imperial black eagle on yellow, clearly displays his Ghibelline sympathies. We reconstruct his defensive equipment as that of a rich knight; his surcoat now displays his full heraldic identification. So too does his horse's trapper, which may be worn over quilted protection, lighter than the ringmail alternative.

D3: Sienese infantryman from San Martino

The foot militiamen from Siena wore over their *gambesons* surcoats in the distinctive colours of each *terziere*: red for San Martino, green for Città, and black-and-white for Camollia. In addition, their shields were painted with the distinctive heraldic emblem of each infantry company – in this case the rampant panther on a light blue ground identifies the Pantaneto company, and was also displayed on its *gonfalone* flag.

E: BATTLE OF CAMPALDINO, 1289

This battle, on 11 June 1289, was fought between a Guelph coalition army led by Florence, with some 10,000 foot and 1,600 horse, and a Ghibelline army led by Arezzo, with a comparable strength in infantry but only about 800 cavalry. The Arentines were arrayed in four ranks, the first, second and fourth of cavalry and the third of infantry, facing a Florentine line with deep cavalry in the centre and infantry forming each wing. The Arentines' initial advance made ground in the centre, but was then defeated when taken in both flanks by the Florentine wings.

E1: Slinger from *contado* of Arezzo

The military use of the sling was never fully abandoned in medieval Italy, and this very cheap, simple but effective weapon continued to be employed by some of the poorest auxiliaries mobilized in the rural territories surrounding cities. Apart from his weapon the general appearance of this slinger is typical of the *zafones* light skirmishers and *bubulci* pioneers who performed auxiliary duties in most communal armies.

E2: Florentine *feditore* of Cerchi family

The *feditori* were young would-be knights coming from rich but non-noble urban families. In order to prove their valour before being fully accepted into the communal *milites*, they were equipped as a type of lighter cavalry and had the honour of launching the first charge against the enemy – note the use of a *chapel-de-fer* rather than a 'great helm'. Our *feditore*, fighting after being unhorsed in battle, comes from one of the richest Florentine families: the Cerchi were powerful merchants who played a leading role in the political life of the city. The Italian word *cerchio* means 'circle', and his shield blazon of yellow circles on a blue ground is an example of what are known in English as 'canting arms' – a sort of visual pun.

E3: Guglielmino degli Ubertini, Bishop of Arezzo

The military commander of the Ghibellines in this battle was the city's powerful bishop, Guglielmino degli Ubertini. Note

Reconstruction: a Tuscan communal knight of the mid-13th century. His layers of protection begin with a padded cap, a long padded *gambeson* or *aketon*, and ringmail *chausses* on his legs. Over a ringmail hood, separate from the long ringmail *hauberk,* he wears a close-fitting hemispherical *cervelliera* helmet; over this is strapped the heavily padded 'great helm'. He would probably wear a coat-of-plates over his *hauberk* (see Plate E3); over his *chausses*, padded *cuisses* with domed knee-guards protect his upper legs, and iron greaves his shins. The quartered heraldic colours on his surcoat and shield are repeated on the rectangular *ailettes* or *Achsel-Schilde* laced on at his shoulders, allowing identification from the sides. (Author's collection, courtesy of Antichi Popoli)

two features distinctive of ecclesiastical leaders who went to war in person: the crest on his helm fashioned as a bishop's mitre, and his use of a mace *(mazza ferrata)* rather than a sword. The latter was a cynical ploy adopted to get around the religious prohibition on churchmen 'shedding blood': they could kill enemies, but only *'sine effusione sanguinis'*. The second half of the 13th century saw the development of plate armour elements worn in combination with the mail *hauberk*. Initially plate armour was mostly made of *cuir bouilli* (boiled, moulded and hardened leather); here, this material is used for the domed defences mounted on quilted *cuisses* at the knees, at the shoulders above leather strips, and for the gauntlet cuffs, but the greaves on the lower legs are already in metal. The mail hood worn under the helm was now a separate *camail.* Over the *hauberk* the bishop wears a 'coat-of-plates', called in Italian a *lameria;* buckled on at the back, this is a tabard-shaped garment made of small iron plates riveted between two layers of thick fabric in such a way as to allow some flexibility of the torso. Apparently, these *lamerie* were first introduced in Italy on a large scale by the German mercenary knights employed by Manfred of Swabia.

F: BATTLE OF MELORIA, 1284

This battle, fought near the island of Meloria in the Ligurian Sea on 5–6 August 1284, was the most important naval action fought between the Maritime Republics during the 13th century; the tactics employed were the time-honoured combination of ramming and boarding. The Genoese, under Oberto Doria, lured the weaker Pisan fleet out of the mouth of the River Arno by concealing part of their strength, and then overwhelmed them, reportedly sinking or taking many of their ships with great loss of life and thousands of prisoners taken. Genoa's victory marked its definitive ascendancy as the main rival to Venice, and condemned Pisa to a long period of decline.

F1: Genoese crossbowman

The *balistari* of Genoa were elite troops, widely employed as mercenaries in European armies, but this crossbowman serves with the reserve militia formed by all able-bodied citizens. This was organized according to the eight quarters of the city, which were known as *compagne.* Each of these had its own heraldic emblem, which was painted on the *pavesi* of the crossbowmen; our militiaman is a member of the Soziglia *compagna,* which served in the left-hand division of the fleet at Meloria, under the Doria family. His main weapon is a stirrup crossbow, while defensive equipment includes a *chapel-de-fer* worn over a *camail,* and a short-sleeved *gambeson*. Note the swollen shafts of the crossbow bolts, to increase their strength against the powerful shock of discharge.

F2: Pisan knight of Delle Brache family

Pisa's military organization was the result of a particular political and social process, which saw the settlement of several feudal families inside the city and the subsequent birth of the *consorteria*. The rich and influential Delle Brache family led one of the most important of these semi-feudal alliances, and as well as raising troops they were able to provide some ships in time of war. This knight, perhaps the military commander of a ship, has a 'great helm', a mail *hauberk* complete with mittens, footed *chausses*, and iron greaves. The falchion was a preferred weapon for fighting in the cramped conditions of a shipboard battle.

F3: Pisan naval infantryman

The militiaman leaping to the knight's aid is protected by a *coretto* corselet in *cuir bouilli*, its two rigid plates buckled at the shoulders and sides. This kind of armour, light and easy to produce, was popular among the communal militiamen of the late 13th century; it is worn here in combination with a substantial *gambeson* and a *camail*. The main weapon is a harpoon, perfect for naval warfare. On the breastplate of the *coretto* are two painted emblems. That on his left is the white cross on a red ground of Pisa, which became common to the Italian Ghibelline cities that supported the Emperor and his heirs, just as the Guelph cities supporting the popes displayed a red cross on white. The device on his right is that of the *consorteria* of the Della Gherardesca family, probably the most important in the city; it incorporates the black-on-yellow imperial eagle symbol to show its loyalty to the Ghibelline cause.

G: THE ARMY OF ANJOU, 1266-1325

G1: Lorenzo Acciaiuoli

Lorenzo Acciaiuoli, one of the most famous Italian knights of the first half of the 14th century, was the eldest son of the rich Florentine merchant and banker Niccolò Acciaiuoli. After the defeat of King Manfred at Benevento in 1266, Florence soon became the most important ally of the new Angevin royal house in southern Italy, where its merchants – prominent among them Niccolò Acciaiuoli, who moved to Naples – enjoyed almost a monopoly. His son Lorenzo fought as a knight in the royal army until 1353. Our reconstruction shows all the magnificence of Angevin military fashions, which apart from the old-fashioned looking helmet closely follow contemporary French styles. The *hauberk* is supplemented with several defensive elements in *cuir bouilli* richly decorated with gilding: the back-and-breast *cuirass, vambraces* on the forearms, and *cuisses*. Other components, however, are already in metal: the gauntlets*, poleyns* at the knees, and shoe-like articulated *sabatons*. The shield shows the heraldic emblem of the Acciaiuoli family: a lion rampant in light blue on a white ground, now with the significant addition of the flag of the royal house of Anjou – three gold *fleurs-de-lys* on a blue ground, with red edging.

G2: Provençal infantry *serjeant*

Serjeants, both foot and mounted, were the backbone of Charles of Anjou's army in 1266; being experienced professional soldiers, and those from his possessions in Provence being notably loyal, they proved more than a match for the weaker infantry deployed by Manfred of Swabia. This soldier's substantial defensive equipment includes a *chapel-de-fer*, a short mail *hauberk* under a horizontally-ribbed *gambeson* coloured blue, and simple but effective leg protection similarly made of quilted material. His small round shield *(rotella)* bears the Angevin royal arms; his main weapon is a bill, backed up with a knightly sword and a 'ballock' dagger.

G3: Albanian archer from Dyrrachium

In 1271 Charles of Anjou conquered large parts of present-day Albania, hoping to use these territories as a jumping-off point for a future invasion of the former Byzantine Empire. These dreams never came true, but the Angevins' Balkan dominions (their so-called Kingdom of Albania) survived until 1368, with a capital at the important port-city of Dyrrachium. While the Albanians' military contribution to the defence of the Angevin

possessions was limited, some auxiliary contingents of light infantry and cavalry were occasionally sent to serve in southern Italy. This foot archer wears the traditional Albanian hat of the time and a quilted *gambeson,* and is armed with a composite bow (showing a certain Byzantine influence) and a curved sabre in the Eastern style.

H: THE ARMY OF ARAGON, 1282-1325

H1: Catalan knight

Catalonia and the city of Barcelona were the real centre of the Aragonese empire, which strove against Venice and Genoa for control of the western Mediterranean. This Catalan knight, presumably the commander of a warship, has typical equipment of the lighter style generally preferred when serving at sea. For better vision he has chosen a *chapel-de-fer* instead of a 'great helm', and his *hauberk* is supplemented only with plate greaves and *poleyns*. His sword and dagger are both of a quality demonstrating his wealth.

H2: Catalan crossbowman

The superiority of the Aragonese fleet rested upon the excellent training of its crews and crossbowmen, who were famous throughout the Mediterranean. When serving on shipboard the crossbowmen generally wore no armour, which would hamper their necessary agility in a sea battle and might condemn them to drowning. Note the characteristic horizontally striped decoration of the tunic and hood. As well as a stirrup crossbow spanned using a belt-hook, our soldier also carries a large Catalan *coltell* knife for hand-to-hand combat.

H3: Almogavar light infantryman

Alhough illustrated here on shipboard, the Almogavars were specialist mountain light infantry. Their light weapons (a spear, two javelins, and a large knife), and baggage limited to a single satchel per man, permitted remarkable speed and mobility over every kind of terrain. Simple *cervelliera*-shape helmets in either metal or leather might be worn, but the normal headgear was a cloth *coif.* The Almogavars wore full beards and dressed quite poorly, with a short tunic, leather breeches, and light leather sandals. In addition they always carried a good piece of flint; traditionally, before going into battle they struck this on their weapons to produce showers of sparks that scared their enemies, while shouting their warcry *'Desperta ferro!'* ('Iron, awake!')

Reconstruction: militia infantryman of a communal army mid-13th century. From this period the sources start to show the *gambeson* with a high integral collar, apparently closed by buttons at the side; the jacket itself is one of those that fastened by buttons down the centre back, requiring the help of a comrade when dressing for battle. Originally of hardened leather, the knee-protectors on the padded *cuisses* were soon made in metal, evolving into *poleyns*. He might carry a 'heater-shaped' or a quadrangular *tavolaccio* shield; if he is from Florence it would be painted white with a red *fleur-de-lys* device – see Plate D1 – and if from another Lombard League army, then with a red cross on white. (Author's collection, courtesy of Confraternita del Leone/ Historia Viva)

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